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# The Reconstruction of Historical Buildings: A Visitor and Historical Site Study

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# The Reconstruction of Historical Buildings: A Visitor and Historical Site Study

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of  
Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University

By

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## **Abstract**

Is It Ethical to Reconstruct a Historical Building: A Public History View.

By Alyssa Gay Holland, M.A.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2011

Major Director: Dr. John Kneebone, Associate Professor,

Department of History

The reconstruction of historical buildings has been debated by preservationists, archeologists and historians, both with each other and within their own fields. But no matter how intensely scholars discuss and disagree on the subject, professionals at historic sites still continue to reconstruct historical buildings. The questions surrounding historical reconstruction include: is it ethical to reconstruct historical buildings? Is it worthwhile to reconstruct historical buildings for the benefit of the general public? I surveyed historical site workers from across the country and visitors from Red Hill National Memorial, the last home of Patrick Henry. From the survey, visitors seem to remember where they have seen reconstructions, sometimes what happened to the original buildings and learn about the history and preservation of the historic location. Sites that continue to reconstruct and follow all the preservation laws and regulations and inform the public on why the site reconstructed the building(s) are getting it right.

## Chapter One-History of Reconstructing Historical Buildings

Reconstruction, according to *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, is defined as “the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.”<sup>1</sup> The reconstruction of historical buildings has been debated by preservationists, archeologists and historians, both with each other and within their own fields, since the creation of the first major reconstruction project at Colonial Williamsburg in 1926. But no matter how intensely scholars discuss and disagree on the subject, professionals at historic sites still continue to reconstruct historical buildings. The questions raised by surrounding historical reconstruction include: is it ethical to reconstruct historical buildings? Is it worthwhile to reconstruct historical buildings for the benefit of the general public? Why should historical sites spend money on a reconstructed historical building that may or may not be accurately represented? By looking through the history of the preservation and reconstruction of historical buildings, one can understand the controversy over historical reconstruction, which continues even today.

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<sup>1</sup> Anne E. Grimmer and Kay D. Weeks, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historical Properties: Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restore and Reconstructing Historical Buildings*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior) 1995; The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historical Properties: Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historical Buildings Website. <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/>.

Preservation of historical buildings in the United States did not begin until the 1850s when women's groups started to save and preserve historical locations such as George Washington's home at Mount Vernon in Virginia.<sup>2</sup> The reconstruction and or relocation of historical buildings began in the late nineteenth century and aroused little or no opposition. Private groups or individual businessmen started buying historical buildings, dismantling them, and relocating them to world's fairs or to large cities in order to reconstruct them as museums. The main reason for this relocation of historical buildings involved the desire to profit from the resultant tourist trade. From the 1880s through the 1920s, it was very difficult for Americans to travel due to inadequate roads and few could afford to travel great distances or for very long periods of time, meaning that it was nearly impossible to make a profitable tourism business out of most historical buildings on their original sites. It was much easier to dismantle a historical building and move it to a more densely populated area for the main purpose of profit. Unfortunately, the preservation of these buildings did not seem to be the highest priority. Following several world's fairs, many reconstructed buildings disappeared or were allowed to deteriorate far away from their original locations. One example is Libby Prison, originally located in Richmond, Virginia, which operated as a Confederate prison for Union officers during the Civil War. In 1888, W. H. Gray, and an association of other Chicago businessmen, created the Libby Prison War Museum Corporation with the intention of dismantling the building and bringing it to the Chicago World's Fair scheduled for 1893. In 1889, the building was moved to Chicago near where the World's Fair was to be held and reconstructed as the Libby Prison National Museum. By 1899,

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<sup>2</sup> Mount Vernon Ladies' Association was created in 1853 and recognized as the first national preservation organization in America.



when the museum ceased to make a profit, it was sold, dismantled, and pieces of the building were sold off as souvenirs. At this point, sadly, no standards for the preservation or reconstruction of historical buildings existed.<sup>3</sup>

In the early Twentieth century, a few of the first permanent museums with historical reconstructions included the Hancock Mansion in Ticonderoga, New York; the Benaiah Titcomb House in Newburyport, Massachusetts and the Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace in New York City. The first and third of these historical buildings were reconstructed, with all or mostly new materials, near or on their original sites. The Benaiah Titcomb House was relocated to the nearby town of Essex, Massachusetts.<sup>4</sup>

Before the existence of the National Park Service and formal standards for reconstructing historical buildings, one of the first scholars to discuss historical reconstruction was William Appleton. A pioneer architectural preservationist, Appleton founded the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, now renamed Historic New England, in 1910. Appleton opposed moving a historical building in order for it be reconstructed elsewhere, but was not against utilizing new materials in order to reconstruct a building on its original site for educational purposes.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> R.W. Wiatt, Jr., *Official Publication #12, Richmond Civil War Centennial Committee, 1961-1965*.

<sup>4</sup> Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States Before Williamsburg*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons 1965), pp. 146-148, 277-278; Shania Hancock Mansion in Ticonderoga, New York, demolished in 1863 and reconstructed in the mid-1920s as a replica of Thomas Hancock's home, he was the uncle to John Hancock of the American Revolution and President of the Second Continental Congress. The house is now used by the Ticonderoga Historical Society, [www.thehancockhouse.org/](http://www.thehancockhouse.org/); *The Benaiah Titcomb House, built c. 1695, forced to dismantle the house and move from Newburyport, Massachusetts to Essex, Massachusetts in the early 1900s; Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace is located in New York City, demolished in 1916 and reconstructed in the early 1920s on the original location.*

<sup>5</sup> Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States Before Williamsburg*, pp. 12-13; *Historic New England website*, <http://www.historicnewengland.org/about-us/founder-and-history-1>; William Sumner Appleton (1874-1947) Born in Boston, Appleton went to Harvard and became a businessman in real estate. After having a

The first major reconstruction and restoration projects were started by John D. Rockefeller and Henry Ford. In 1926, Rockefeller and Reverend Dr. W.A.R. Goodwin, the rector of Bruton Parish Church, decided to save what was left of historic Williamsburg, the colonial capital of Virginia. Now called Colonial Williamsburg, the site has restored eighty-eight historical buildings and reconstructed over three hundred and fifty buildings between 1930 and the present; the most recent is the reconstruction of Charlton's Coffeehouse in 2009 and the Anderson Blacksmith Shop and Public Armory currently happening. When preservationists started to discuss the problems with reconstructing historical buildings they often focused on the accuracy and authenticity of the reconstructions at Colonial Williamsburg. Some preservationists and historians felt, especially early on in the preservation process, that Rockefeller only focused on the upper-class homes and trade buildings and not those of lower class citizens, farmers or slaves of Williamsburg. Also, the problem of only focusing on one time period and not the whole life of a town come into play. This is why, in some circles, even with the site beginning to expand in its interpretation and focusing on a broader area of the past, there are those who call Colonial Williamsburg the Disney World of history.<sup>6</sup> Unlike Rockefeller's method of reconstructing and restoring buildings on the historical site, Henry Ford dismantled and shipped one hundred historical buildings to his 255-acre reserve in Dearborn, Michigan. Ford wanted to create a museum focused on the industrial history of the United States and, by 1933, opened Greenfield Village and the Henry Ford Museum. The establishment of Greenfield Village, as well as other similar

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nervous breakdown, he became interested in preserving the historical buildings of New England's past; In 1889, the first statewide historic preservation organization was the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) now Preservation Virginia.

<sup>6</sup> Tatiana Schlossberg, "Not For the Faint of Heart: Colonial Williamsburg Edition," *The Yale Herald*, March 26, 2010. <http://yaleherald.com/arts/not-for-the-faint-of-heart-colonial-williamsburg-edition/>.

projects, helped bring into preservation circles the controversy of moving historical buildings from their original foundations. During both of these large preservation projects, no national standards for historical reconstruction yet existed; both locations created and followed their own standards.<sup>7</sup>

In 1916 when President Woodrow Wilson signed the Organic Act, creating the National Park Service, the Department of the Interior administered only twenty-six historical sites.<sup>8</sup> In 1933, the Government Reorganization Act “provided the authority for an Executive Order that transferred administration of historical and military parks in the custody of various federal departments to the National Park Service.”<sup>9</sup> Following the consolidation of these historic sites under the control of the NPS, the Park Service accounted for nearly sixty historical and military sites. A new NPS historical division was created about this time to investigate the problems of historic preservation within these historic sites. The Historic Sites Act of 1935 was the first national official act to mandate the preservation of historical buildings. The Act stated “that it is a national policy to preserve for the public use historic sites, buildings, and objects of national

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<sup>7</sup> *Greenfield Village & Henry Ford Museum (Edison Institute), Detroit; A National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary.* <http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/detroit/d37.htm>; The only home at the site that was reconstructed totally from new material was the Patrick Henry House in Colonial Village at Dearborn Inn, MI.

<sup>8</sup> President Woodrow Wilson signed the Organic Act on August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. F35). It states, “There is created in the Department of the Interior a service to be called the National Park Service, which shall be under the charge of a director. The Secretary of the Interior shall appoint the director, and there shall also be in said service such subordinate officers, clerks, and employees as may be appropriated for by Congress. The service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations hereinafter specified, except such as are under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Army, as provided by law, by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks, monuments, and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” <http://archnet.asu.edu/topical/crm/usdocs/organic.html>.

<sup>9</sup> *Administrative Policies for Historic Areas of the National Park Service*, (U.S. Department of the Interior: National Park Service) 1973, pp. 22.

significance for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States.”<sup>10</sup> The act states further in section two on preservation: “Restore, reconstruct, rehabilitate, preserve and maintain historic or prehistory sites, buildings, objects, and property of national historical or archaeological significance and where deemed desirable establish and maintain museums in connection therewith.”<sup>11</sup> Included within this act for preservation of historical buildings was reconstruction as a preservation method. From the creation of the Historic Sites Act of 1935, the NPS would be the leading authority on the preservation of historical buildings in the United States.

The Historic Act of 1935, section three, required a meeting on historic preservation to take place, and within a year the 1936 Advisory Board for Preservation convened. Chosen by Department of the Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, all board members were “noted historians, archeologists, and preservationists representing all geographical areas of the nation.”<sup>12</sup> The two meetings took place on February 13-14 and May 7-9, 1936. During one of these meetings, Fiske Kimball, an architectural historian,

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<sup>10</sup> *Federal Historic Preservation Laws, Preservation of Historic Sites Act, August 21, 1935* (49 Stat. 666; 16 U.S.C. 461-467); *Historic Sites Act of 1935, Public No.292-74th Congress*.  
<http://www.blm.gov/heritage/docum/histsite.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> *Federal Historic Preservation Laws, Preservation of Historic Sites Act, pp.461-467*.

<sup>12</sup> *Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s: Administration History, L. Appointment and Early Activities of the Advisory Board*. [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/unrau-williss/adhi51.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/unrau-williss/adhi51.htm). This group of eleven included (all jobs mentioned were held at the time of the committee) Edmund H. Abrahams from Savannah, GA, head of the Savannah Commission for the Preservation; Dr. Herbert E. Bolton chairman of the Department of History and Director of Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley; Dr. Hermon C. Bumpus of Duxbury, MA, chairman of the Committee of Museums in the NPS; Mrs. Reau Folk, Nashville, TN, the Regent of the Ladies Hermitage; George Keim of Edgewater Park, NJ, chairman of the State Commission on Historical Sites; Dr. Alfred Kidder, Andover, MA, chairman of Division on Historical Research of the Institute of Washington; Dr. Fiske Kimball of Philadelphia, PA, director of the Pennsylvania Museum of Art; Archibald McCrea, Williamsburg, VA, restorator of Carter’s Grove; Dr. Frank Oastler, New York City, member of former Educational Advisory Board, NPS; Dr. Clark Wissler, New York City, Curator of Ethnology at the American Museum of Natural History and Professor of Anthropology in the Institute of Human Relations at Yale.

thought reconstructions should appear aged to match the fabric of the rest, if any, of the original buildings in a particular location. Kimball stated that, “we should rebuild destroyed buildings on important historic sites. Even the ruins are more interesting, when used in a restoration.”<sup>13</sup> Verne Chatelain, the first Chief Historian of the National Park Service, argued that instead of reconstructing historical buildings for interpretative purposes an alternative way of interpreting sites must be found. Chatelain’s fear was that a historical reconstruction would only focus on “one time period” and leave the remaining history to be forgotten.<sup>14</sup> In 1937, the committee drafting the NPS policy on preservation decided the preferred order of preservation: “Better to preserve than repair, better to repair than restore, better to restore than construct.”<sup>15</sup> The reconstruction discussion continued after these initial meetings. In 1938, Robert F. Lee, the second Chief Historian for the NPS, fought against the reconstruction of the McLean House at Appomattox Court House National Historical Park where Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered his army to Union General Ulysses S. Grant. Robert F. Lee believed that a “model” or paintings should be used as alternative interpretive tools instead of reconstructing the McLean House.<sup>16</sup> The reason Lee had to yield his anti-reconstruction view was due to local political pressure that Lee later called the “second surrender of Lee at Appomattox.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Barry Mackintosh, “To Reconstruct or Not to Reconstruct: An Overview of Policy and Practice,” *Resource Management Bulletin*, 13 (1990): 5-7, 14.

<sup>14</sup> Advisory Board Minutes, 7-9 May 1936, National Register, History, and Education (NRHE files).

<sup>15</sup> Barry Mackintosh, “To Reconstruct or Not to Reconstruct: An Overview of Policy and Practice,” 5.

<sup>16</sup> Barry Mackintosh, “National Park Service Reconstruction Policy and Practice.” *The Reconstructed Past: Reconstruction in the Public Interpretation of Archeology and History*, ed. John Jameson, Jr. (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> Mackintosh, “To Reconstruct or Not to Reconstruct: An Overview of Policy and Practice,” 7.

The disputed about the McLean House settled little, and the discussions over reconstructing historical buildings continued. In 1955, the National Park Service decided to update the 1935 Historic Sites Act for preservation. If historians, preservationists and archeologists wanted to remove reconstruction from the preservation act this would have been the time to do it. But section two, section f of this act, still stated, “Restore, reconstruct, rehabilitate, preserve, and maintain historic or prehistoric sites, buildings, objects, and properties of national historical or archaeological significance and where deemed desirable establish and maintain museums in connection therewith.”<sup>18</sup>

The Secretary of the Interior’s policies continued to include reconstruction as a preservation method. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 in Title one, section 101-3 states, “the term ‘historic preservation’ includes the protection, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction of districts, buildings, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, or culture.”<sup>19</sup> In 1968 and later revised in 1973, the National Park Service compiled and published an updated preservation document, *Administrative Policies for Historical Areas of the National Park System*. In the area of historical structures, it states the only times reconstruction should be allowed: First, when “all or almost all traces of a structure have disappeared and its reconstruction is essential for public understanding and appreciation of the historical associations for which the park was established.”<sup>20</sup> Second, when “sufficient

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<sup>18</sup> *A Brief History of the National Park Service*. [www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/kieley23.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/kieley23.htm); The 1955 Preservation Act is, “to provide for the preservation of historical sites, buildings, objects, and antiquities of national significance, and for other purposes.”

<sup>19</sup> National Historic Preservation Act 1966 (80 Stat. 915).  
[www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/anps/anps\\_6e.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/anps/anps_6e.htm)

<sup>20</sup> *Administrative Policies for Historic Areas of the National Park Service*, pp.28.

historical, archeological, and architectural data exist to permit an accurate reproduction.”<sup>21</sup> Third, “the structure can be erected on the original site or in a setting appropriate to the significance of the area, as in a pioneer community or living farm, where exact sites of structures may not be identifiable through research.”<sup>22</sup>

The National Park Service’s *Cultural Management Policies of 1975* did restrict reconstruction in order to protect the archeology of a site. Reconstructions are only allowed when: “1. There are no significant preservable remains that would be obliterated by reconstruction. 2. Historical, archeological, and architectural data are sufficient to permit an accurate reproduction with a minimum of conjecture. 3. The structure can be erected on the original site. 4. All prudent and feasible alternatives to reconstruction have been considered, and it is demonstrated that reconstruction is the only alternative that permits and is essential to public understanding and appreciation of the historical and cultural association for which the park was established.”<sup>23</sup>

In the mid-1970s, too, a new type of reconstruction began to emerge which the NPS and several private sites have used over time as an alternative to a full historical building reconstruction. At Franklin Court, the site of what was Benjamin Franklin’s house in Philadelphia, the NPS placed a “ghost structure” where the building was originally located. Franklin built the house between 1763 and 1765; and lived there with his wife and son when he was in Philadelphia. Franklin died in the house in 1790, and it was later torn down to make way for row houses. In June 1948 Independence National Historical Park was created and took over operation of the site. In the 1950s the National Park Service rejected the idea of reconstructing a historical building on the site. With a lack of contemporary information describing the layout of the structure and having only archeology as evidence the NPS decided on a metal 3-D “ghost structure.”

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, pp.28.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, pp.28-29.

<sup>23</sup> National Park Service Management Policies, Chapter 5, 1975, pp.16-17.

The “ghost structure” shows the visitor the outline of the building and its dimensions without the expense, intense research, and necessary maintenance of a fully reconstructed building. Independence National Historical Park decided to bring in the well-known firm of Venturi and Rauch (now known as Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates) as the architects for the project, and from 1972 to 1976 they created two structures outlining the building as archeologists think it would have looked while Franklin was living there. At the bicentennial of the American Revolution in 1976 the area opened to the public.<sup>24</sup>

Nonetheless, Richard Sellers and Dwight Pitcaithley’s article, “Reconstruction—Expensive, Life Size Toys” in the NPS’s *Cultural Resource Management Bulletin* in December 1979, stated that the National Park Service must not do reconstructions. Sellers and Pitcaithley’s reasons for not reconstructing were “philosophical, economical

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<sup>24</sup>*Independence NHP Archeology at Franklin Court*. Archeology Program, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. <http://www.nps.gov/archeology/sites/npSites/franklincourt.htm>; Frank Matero, “Ben’s House: Designing History at Franklin Court, Philadelphia,” *Archeology Institute of America*. [http://www.archaeological.org/pdfs/sitepreservation/Matero\\_2010\\_v.6.pdf](http://www.archaeological.org/pdfs/sitepreservation/Matero_2010_v.6.pdf); Pole Green Church, in Hanover County, VA, was originally built in 1755 and is where the first Southern Presbyterians met. In 1864, during the Civil War, the Church burned after an artillery shell went through the building. In 1990 the Pole Green Church Foundation wanted to protect the site. After archeology, the Pole Green Foundation decided that instead of reconstructing the site it would place a hanging “ghost structure” of the building up. Wolstenholme Towne was a seventeenth century settlement near Jamestown, Virginia. In 1622, Wolstenholme Towne, part of Martins Hundred of James City County, VA, was one of many sites attacked by Indians during the Anglo-Powhatan Wars. The Indians chased off or killed most of the population of that site and it was completely abandoned by 1645. In 1975, Ivor Noel Hume, the father of archeology, was conducting archeology on the site looking for 18<sup>th</sup> century support buildings for Carter’s Grove 18<sup>th</sup> plantation and randomly found the site. After eight years of research on the site, Colonial Williamsburg built a partial ghost reconstruction of the palisades and buildings on the site. Personally, the partial reconstructions, such as the Franklin House with the large metal “ghost structure” frames are just unattractive overall and I am not a fan. A painting or a 3D computer animation program would show the public great detail. But if a site chooses this alternative to reconstructing the entire building, wooden partials, though harder to maintain, personally look natural compared to their metal counterparts. Andersonville National Historical Site in Georgia and Wolstenholme Towne in Virginia both have wooden examples of partial “ghost structures.”



and practical.”<sup>25</sup> In addition, they argued that reconstructions illustrate how the past may have appeared, but “not how it did look,” that these reconstructions take away from the original locations or buildings on site, and that the “structures are not historic.”<sup>26</sup> The authors called the popularity of reconstructions the result of the “Williamsburg Syndrome.”<sup>27</sup> Charles Bohannon, one of the regional archeologists for the National Park Service, wrote a letter to the editor of the *Cultural Resources Management Bulletin* in December 1979 disagreeing with the Sellers and Pitcaithley article. In the letter, Bohannon contended, “there are instances where reconstructions are desirable and justifiable.” In terms of “historical integrity,” Bohannon stated, “some properties have more than others, but only rarely could one state that a well reconstructed site possesses it or lacks it totally.” Bohannon also disagreed with Sellers and Pitcaithley’s statements that reconstructions are “expensive life-size toys, manufactured for children of all ages who have forgotten how to read.”<sup>28</sup> Bohannon believed that the National Park Service was created first and foremost for public education and enjoyment.

In 1981, the NPS went in the direction of taking reconstruction completely out of methods for historic structure preservation with the creation of the Service’s *Cultural*

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<sup>25</sup> Richard Sellers and Dwight Pitcaithley, “Reconstruction—Expensive, Life Size Toys.” *Cultural Resource Management Bulletin*, December 1979; John H. Jameson, Jr. ed., *The Reconstructed Past: Reconstructed in the Public Interpretation of Archaeology and History*. New York: Alta Mira Press, (2004). Dwight Pitcaithley is a professor of the University New Mexico State and is a retired Chief Historian of the National Park Service.; Dr. Richard Sellers is a former historian for mainly what is now called the Pacific West Region of the National Park Service.

<sup>26</sup> Sellers and Pitcaithley, “Reconstruction—Expensive, Life Size Toys.”

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Letter to Mr. Douglas Caldwell from Charles F. Bohannon, April 25 1980. Pitcaithley Reconstruction Files, National Park Service HC RG 63.; Charles F. Bohannon at the time was the regional archeologist for what is now the Pacific West region of the National Park Service.

*Resources Management Guidelines* or the NPS-Directors Order 28 (NPS-28).<sup>29</sup> Within the NPS-28 it stated, “the Service does not endorse, support, or encourage the reconstruction of historic structures.”<sup>30</sup> Rodd Wheaton endorsed this view in September 1985 when he presented a paper at the annual meeting of the Association for Preservation Technology entitled, “To Reconstruct or Not Reconstruct: Decision Within Documentation,” in which the author criticized the reconstruction of Fort Union on the Montana-North Dakota state line. Wheaton believed that the NPS did not have the documentation to reconstruct the fort and lacked the necessary funds for research and maintenance, all this at a site already plagued with preservation issues.<sup>31</sup>

William Penn Mott, Jr., who became the NPS director in 1985, disagreed with the anti-reconstruction views. Mott’s main focus on interpretation and education within historic sites forced the Park Service to revise the anti-reconstruction views within NPS-28. According to 1988 management policies, a historical building that has vanished may be reconstructed if:

1. Reconstruction is essential to permit understanding of the cultural associations of a park established for that purpose.
2. Sufficient data exists to permit reconstruction on the original site with minimal conjecture.
3. Significant archeology resources will be preserved in situ or their research values will be realized through data recovery.
4. A vanished structure will not be reconstructed to appear damaged or ruined.
5. Generalized representations of typical structures will not be attempted.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *NPS-28 Cultural Resource Management Guideline.*

[http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/nps28/28contents.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/nps28/28contents.htm).; This NPS Management Policy states the basic principles of governing the management of cultural resources that include archeological resources, cultural landscapes, historical structures, museum objects and ethnographic resources.

<sup>30</sup> Rodd Wheaton, “To Reconstruct or Not Reconstruct: Decision Within Documentation,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Preservation Technology (September 1985), Pitcaithley Reconstruction Files, Harpers Ferry Center, Harpers Ferry, WV. pp.5; Rodd Wheaton was an architect for the National Park Service and is now working for The Collaborative Inc, a historic preservation group based in Boulder, CO.

Berry Mackintosh, “To Reconstruct or Not to Reconstruct: An overview of NPS Policy and Practice.” *CRM* 13(1990) 5-7.

<sup>31</sup> Rodd Wheaton, “To Reconstruct or Not Reconstruct: Decision Within Documentation.” pp. 5.

<sup>32</sup> National Park Service, Management Policies, Chap. 5, pp. 7, 1988.

The debate continued. In 1990, Dr. William Hunt wrote a letter to the editor of *Cultural Resources Management* about his involvement with the reconstruction of Fort Union. Hunt personally opposed reconstructions and believed that placing a reconstruction “on-site” of the original building was unethical. Hunt believed that the reconstruction of Fort Union:

had both bad and good components. On the negative side, much of the nationally important archeology resource at Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site has been destroyed. On the positive side, the public now has a beautifully and carefully reconstructed mid-19<sup>th</sup> century fur/robe trading post to visit....Nevertheless, from an overall perspective, I believe the positive contributions at Fort Union Trading Post have outweighed the negative.<sup>33</sup>

In the same issue of *CRM*, Dr. Paul Huey, an archeologist for the state of New York, wrote a letter disagreeing with Hunt’s judgment about the reconstruction of Fort Union. Because “reconstruction unavoidably requires major destruction of archeology resources,” Huey asked,

wouldn’t it have been preferable to preserve as much of the archeological evidence as possible? Carefully planned, limited excavations to answer specific questions could have provided useful data in order to build a diorama or model, perhaps, for a comprehensive interpretive exhibit. Historical knowledge of a site based on archeology is a matter of degree and is never absolute.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Dr. William Hunt, Letter to the Editor, *Cultural Resources Management*, 13( 1990) At the time of the article William Hunt was a supervisory archeologist for the Midwest Archeological Center, National Park Service.

<sup>34</sup> Dr. Paul Huey, Letter to the Editor, *Cultural Resources Management*, National Park Service, Vol. 13: No.1, 1990. At the time of the article Huey was a Senior Scientist (Archeology) for the Bureau of Historic Sites, Historic Preservation Division, New York State Office of Park, Recreation and Historic Preservation, pp. 2.

Huey went on to state that Fort Union was an active fort from 1828 to 1867 but that the reconstruction indicated that there was only “one Fort Union....History, in my estimation, needs to be interpreted as a process of change and development, not a single static moment in time.”<sup>35</sup>

Paul Hedren, who was the superintendent of Fort Union during the reconstruction period of the mid-1980s, acknowledged that even well planned and executed reconstructions “are nothing more than crass manipulations of historic environments. Yet, the National Park Service has long had this bent.”<sup>36</sup> The policies of the 1970s restricted but did not ban NPS reconstructions, and the NPS has long changed the “natural environment through wildland fire programs, the reintroduction of native species and the elimination of exotic species. ...The parallels are patently relevant in historical contexts.”<sup>37</sup> He agreed, too, that “reconstructions are expensive to create” and to maintain, but all facilities within a park have to be maintained and visitor centers built. Money must be spent anyway. Without Fort Union being rebuilt, Hedren stated, “the alternative was a grassy meadow at the end of a gravel road.”<sup>38</sup>

Hedren’s argument notwithstanding, throughout the 1990’s, Barry Mackintosh, a historian with the NPS, who wrote articles and letters in the *CRM* opposing reconstructions, did go on to say that the only time reconstruction within the National Park Service is acceptable is if the reconstructions, such as those at Appomattox Court House National Historical Park in Virginia, “are not stand alone attractions; rather, they

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<sup>35</sup>Huey, Letter to the Editor, Cultural Resources Management, National Park Service, Vol. 13: No.1, 1990.

<sup>36</sup> Paul Hedren, “Why We Reconstructed Fort Union” *The Western Historical Quarterly*, 23 (Aug., 1992): 349-354.

<sup>37</sup> Hedren, “Why We Reconstructed Fort Union,” pp. 353.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, pp. 353.

fill key gaps in a historic complex, like the Capital and Governor's Palace at Colonial Williamsburg."<sup>39</sup>

In the *CRM* in 1992, Rodd Wheaton wrote "Considering Reconstruction as an Educational Tool," in which he discussed the educational value of reconstructing historical buildings. Wheaton had changed some of his thoughts over time. In his earlier paper, "To Reconstruct or Not to Reconstruct: Decision Within Documentation," he stated that the Park Service left holes in NPS-28 in order to allow reconstructions while not officially "endorsing" them. He also argued that the pressure from outside sources, such as Congress, could push through a reconstruction without following the NPS-28 guidelines. "Congress does not recognize reconstructions as a philosophical issue," he said.<sup>40</sup> Wheaton now promoted reconstructions "for the visitors and their education about our past national history. It is incumbent on the National Park Service to consider the best possible opportunities for that interpretation."<sup>41</sup>

In June 1994, the *American Anthropologist* printed an article by Edward Bruner entitled "Abraham Lincoln as Authentic Reproduction: A Critique of Postmodernism." According to Bruner's essay, postmodernist thinkers wrongly believe that contemporary historic reconstructions are phony, that it is unnecessary to teach history to the masses because people are too unintelligent to understand their past, and that most historical sites are in business for monetary reasons only. Defending work at historic sites, Bruner states:

In postmodern writings, contemporary American tourist attractions tend to be described [in terms of]...the inauthentic constructed nature of the sites,

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<sup>39</sup> Mackintosh, "The Case Against Reconstruction."

<sup>40</sup> Rodd Wheaton, "To Reconstruction or Not To Reconstruct: Decision Within Documentation," pp. 15.

<sup>41</sup> Rodd Wheaton, "Considering Reconstruction as an Educational Tool," *Cultural Resource Management*, Vol.15: No.1, 1992.

their appeal to the masses, and their efforts to present a perfect image of themselves. This narrow and distorted view fails to account for the popularity and frequency of such sites [and]...imposes an elitist politics blind to its own assumptions.<sup>42</sup>

Finally, in 1995 the National Park Service published *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historical Properties: Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historical Buildings*.<sup>43</sup> This compilation of updated preservation rules and regulations states:

1. Reconstruction will be used to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture, and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property. 2. Reconstruction of a landscape, building, structure, or object in its historic location will be preceded by a thorough archeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts which are essential to an accurate reconstruction. If such sources must be disturbed, mitigation measurements will be taken. 3. Reconstruction will include measures to preserve any remaining historic materials, features, and spatial relationships. 4. Reconstruction will be based on the accurate duplication of historic features and elements substantiated by documentary or physical evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different features from other historic properties. A reconstructed property will recreate the appearance of the non-surviving historic property in materials, design, color and texture. 5. A reconstruction will be clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation. 6. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Edward M. Bruner, "Abraham Lincoln as Authentic Reproduction: A Critique of Postmodernism," *American Anthropologist* 96 (2) 397-415.; Edward M. Bruner is a Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

<sup>43</sup> "Title 36—Parks, Forests and Public Property, Chapter 1 National Park Service, Department of the Interior; Part 68—The Secretary of the Interior's Standards For the Treatment of Historic Properties." *Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management*. National Park Service. <http://www.nps.gov/policy/DOrders/DOrder28.html>.

[http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx\\_05/36cfr68\\_05.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_05/36cfr68_05.html). It is part of the NPS-28 Cultural Resource Management Guideline for the National Park Service.

<sup>44</sup> Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historical Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historical Buildings*, (Washington, DC: National Park Service), 1995.

Three years later, in 1998, the architectural critic Ada Louise Huxtable wrote *The Unreal America: Architecture and Illusion*, in which she stated that places such as Colonial Williamsburg provide the “replacement of reality with selective fantasy” and are very similar to “Disney-like theme parks.” She argued that a number of buildings, historical in their own right, were destroyed for the reconstruction of a “fake” building. Huxtable’s main example is Colonial Williamsburg where over seven hundred buildings were destroyed to be replaced by reconstructed buildings from the “right” time of 1770.<sup>45</sup>

In the same year, Michael James Kelleher wrote a thesis on “Making History: Reconstructing Historic Structures in the National Park Service,” in which he explored four major reconstruction projects from the 1970s to the mid-1990s. Continuing with the anti-reconstruction views, Kelleher agreed with NPS Historian Barry Mackintosh, who stated in 1991 that the “basic rationale for the Service’s involvement with historical areas has been interpretation, not preservation.”<sup>46</sup> “If historic sites in the National Park Service are valued more for their interpretative potential than for the importance of the resources they contain, it is easy to understand why the Park Service has been willing to actually destroy authentic historic resources [archeology] in order to carry out a reconstruction.”<sup>47</sup> Despite all of the disagreements over reconstructions at Fort Union, Fort Smith, Fort Stanwix and Bent’s Old Fort, the NPS did not remove reconstruction from the Secretary of the Interior’s standards. Kelleher states that when National Park professionals decide

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<sup>45</sup> Ada Louise Huxtable, *The Real America: Architecture and Illusion*, (New York: New Press) 1998 pp. 15-17; Ada Louise Huxtable was the chief architecture critic for the New York Times from 1963 to 1982.

<sup>46</sup> Barry Mackintosh “Interpretation: A Tool for NPS Expansion,” (unpublished manuscript, 1991), pp. 3. Personal files of Barry Mackintosh, National Park Service.

<sup>47</sup> Michael James Kelleher, “Making History: Reconstructing Historic Structures in the National Park Service,” University of Pennsylvania, Unpublished Thesis, 1998.  
[http://www.archive.org/stream/makinghistoryrec00kell/makinghistoryrec00kell\\_djvu.txt](http://www.archive.org/stream/makinghistoryrec00kell/makinghistoryrec00kell_djvu.txt)

they want to reconstruct historical buildings they “should ask themselves if the recreation of history is actually the mission of the National Park Service.”<sup>48</sup>

In 2004, John H. Jameson edited a collection of papers entitled *The Reconstructed Past: Reconstructions in the Public Interpretation of Archaeology and History*. This collection was mostly compiled from the 1997 Society for American Archaeology symposium in Seattle, Washington, and concerns the reconstruction of historical buildings. A mixture of archeologists, preservationists, and historians presented positive and negative views about reconstructing historical buildings, the educational and interpretive values of such efforts, and the place of archeology in the reconstruction process. Dwight Pitcaithley, chief historian of the NPS, wrote the introduction to the work, stating that “reconstructed buildings do provide a three-dimensional pedagogic environment in which visitors can acquire a heightened sense of the past. But this is true only in those cases where the structure is rebuilt with a minimum of conjecture. Weighing the appearance of the reconstruction against the historical evidence available to guide the reconstruction is no easy task. Yet until one does that, one cannot judge the value of the effort.”<sup>49</sup> In the third chapter, Barry Mackintosh charged that reconstructions, especially those on site, have “damaged and destroyed archaeological resources.”<sup>50</sup> The Park Service creates and maintains policies to prevent many reconstructions from occurring but does not always adhere to its own policies. “By its nature, policy is subject to the discretion of agency managers,” he wrote. “Their

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<sup>48</sup> Kelleher, *Making History: Reconstructing Historic Structures in the National Park Service*, 112.

<sup>49</sup> John H. Jameson, ed., *The Reconstructed Past: Reconstructions in the Public Interpretation of Archaeology and History*, (New York: AltaMira Press, 2004), pp. ix-x.

<sup>50</sup> Barry Mackintosh, “To Reconstruct or Not to Reconstruct: An Overview of NPS Policy and Practice.” *CRM* Vol. 13: No1 1990; Barry Mackintosh, “National Park Service Reconstruction Policy and Practice” in *The Reconstructed Past: Reconstructions in the Public Interpretation of Archaeology and History*, ed. John H. Jameson, pp.73; Barry Mackintosh worked for the National Park Service from 1965-1999 as historian at several parks then moving up to historian for the NPS.



commitment to it will inevitably vary with the public and political pressure attended on a public agency. With strong civil and congressional support, the Fort Union Trading Post reconstruction proceeded despite the policies in effect at its inception.”<sup>51</sup>

In 2009, *The Public Historian* conducted an interview with Mike Caldwell, then Superintendent of Fort Stanwix National Monument. Caldwell discussed the administrative history of the site and how he believed that the town and local politicians were the main reason for the reconstruction of the fort. Caldwell stated that, “We [Fort Stanwix and the NPS] found that the creation of Fort Stanwix had clearly been a partnership effort long before the term was ever used as it is in the National Park Service now.” He continues, “A city [Rome] in upstate New York where something very significant historically had happened requested and gave to the National Park Service, sixteen acres in the heart of its downtown to reconstruct its site the fort—as part of a larger urban renewal project.” Caldwell does go on to say that Congressmen and locals caused the main push for this fort to be reconstructed in the middle of the downtown. Though several people from Rome stated that the fort was a failure, in terms of bringing major economic stimulus to the city, a number of people still support the reconstructed fort and the NPS. Caldwell’s main point in the article was that administrative histories of NPS sites are very important for future administrators to have so they can understand what has happened in their park’s past, including reconstructions, and learn from mistakes that may have been made.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Barry Mackintosh, “National Park Service Reconstruction Policy and Practice,” *The Reconstructed Past: Reconstructions in the Public Interpretation of Archaeology and History*, pp. 73.

<sup>52</sup> Mike Caldwell, “The Fort Stanwix Administrative History: A Superintendent’s Perspective,” *The Public Historian*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (May, 2009) pp.66-70.

The newest alternative to physical reconstructions of historical buildings, 3-D animation, began in the mid-2000s. First introduced overseas, several historical sites have begun using this alternative to reconstruction within the United States as well. Fort Laramie National Historic Site in Wyoming is one of the NPS locations using this 3D preservation technology. The 3D images allow visitors to view surviving historic buildings through different time periods as well as archeological sites that have not had a building on them for hundreds of years. In 2009, the NPS, CyArk and the Center of Preservation Research, run by the University of Colorado in Denver, all teamed up to bring this project to life. Fort Laramie Digital Preservation, an online resource, currently has five buildings that have been placed in 3D animation to view in greater detail both the exterior structure as well as the interior.<sup>53</sup>

The question of reconstructing historical buildings will most likely always be argued by the scholars and professionals who helped create and maintain the preservation standards for reconstructing historical buildings. The NPS, a leader in preservation, continues to reconstruct to the standards these scholars and professionals have helped the agency to set. I personally believe that as long as a historical site follows the standards put in place by the NPS, the reconstruction should be accepted as ethical. But how do workers at historic sites or even visitors feel about the reconstruction of historical buildings?

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<sup>53</sup> *Fort Laramie National Historic Site Digital Preservation*. <http://archive.cyarch.cyark.org/fort-larmie-intro>; Fort Laramie National Historic Site. [www.nps.gov/fola/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/fola/index.htm) Fort Laramie National Historic Site is located in Wyoming. Originally the site was used as a fur trading post under the names of Fort Williams in 1834 and then Fort John in 1841 on the Missouri River and Oregon Trail. In 1849, the United States Army purchased the fort from the American Fur Company and changed the name to Fort Laramie to use a military facility. In 1890 the fort was decommissioned. Other historic sites in the United States that have used this technology: (by CyArk Projects) Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado; Presidio of San Francisco within Golden Gate Recreation Area in California; Tudor Place in Washington, D.C.; (not CyArk) Historic Jamestowne part of Colonial National Historical Park in Virginia.

I became interested in this subject while working as a Park Guide at Appomattox Court House National Historical Park. This site has several reconstructed buildings, including one representing the McLean House where Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia to Union General Ulysses S. Grant. In 1891, Captain Myron Dunlap of Niagara Falls, New York, invested in the McLean House with the intention of dismantling the building and displaying it at the Chicago World's Fair scheduled for 1893. When this plan fell through, Dunlap created the Appomattox Land Company and decided to dismantle the McLean House and relocate it to Washington, D.C., in order to create a Civil War museum. The company made photographs and blueprints of the home and began the dismantling process. Unfortunately, the Panic of 1893 put the company out of business, leaving the structure in its dismantled state. For the next forty-seven years the house remained in pieces on site; meanwhile eager souvenir hunters, and locals looking for free building materials and elements, slowly obliterated the original materials. The National Park Service took over the site in 1935 and after World War II began the reconstruction process. Only after buying and examining the blue prints and photographs and looking over the archeological data did the site begin reconstruction. Completed in the spring of 1949, the McLean House was dedicated and opened to the public in April 1950. The reason for reconstructing the McLean House remains clear: the house and the event that occurred inside is the main house reason the park exists. In other words, without the McLean house the site would be incomplete.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> "McLean House Reconstructed Assured" in *The Regional Review*, Vol. 5 No. 6, (Dec. 1940); *Appomattox Court House National Historical Park*. National Register of Historic Places, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service; McLean House at Appomattox Court House NHP. <http://www.nps.gov/apco/mclean-house.htm>; Appomattox Court House National Historical Park

During the fall of 2006 when, standing inside the McLean House, I was accosted by a female visitor who stomped into the house and proceeded to question me about why the building had been dismantled by the government. Many people automatically assume that the National Park Service, or another department of the federal government, relocated the house. After calming this visitor down, I began my interpretation regarding the background of the house, what happened to it, and the fact that the NPS did not even come into existence until 1916. Therefore, the park had nothing to do with the dismantling of the McLean House or anything to do with the site until the late 1920s. Then I asked her what she thought about the Park Service reconstructing the McLean House or any other buildings on site. By this point, the visitor's attitude had changed dramatically from hostility to understanding; she stated that it was entirely appropriate for us to reconstruct the house in order for visitors to understand and visualize what took place in the parlor on April 9, 1865. I asked several other visitors how they felt about the reconstructed buildings on site. From this I decided to research and discover whether or not anyone else had asked visitors what they thought of the reconstruction of historical buildings. I discovered that no one had done significant research on visitors and their opinions on historical reconstructions.<sup>55</sup>

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Handbook (U.S. Department of the Interior: Washington, D.C.), 112-113; The structure was originally built in 1848 by the Raine family as a tavern guest house, Wilmer McLean bought the property in the fall of 1862 to use as a private residence for his wife Virginia and their children. McLean gave Union and Confederate officers permission to use the building for the surrender meeting. The house was also used as a headquarters by General Gibbon of the 24<sup>th</sup> Corps of the Union Army of the James. After the war, McLean defaulted on loans and had to give up the property in 1867, the McLeans were forced to leave when the bank put the property up for auction. From 1872-1891 the Ragland family owned the property until Captain Myron Dunlap and the Appomattox Land Company bought the property.

<sup>55</sup> The interpretation of the McLean House often includes explaining what happened to the original house and why it was reconstructed. The park also has a sign in front of the McLean House explaining to the visitor what happened to the house. In addition, an exhibit inside the visitor center on the reconstruction and restoration of the village and information in the park pamphlet furthers the visitor's understanding of the reconstruction.

Along with the information collected from visitors, I decided to research how employees at historic locations felt about reconstructing historical buildings. This would include interviewing individuals that had worked at or are currently working at a historical location with reconstructions. There are some articles written on the subject from the perspective of historic site employees but almost none concern the point of view of the visitor.

Very few researchers have taken surveys of people in the field of history, let alone regarding reconstruction of historical buildings. Just to find a method for collecting and producing statistics was difficult. Eventually I decided to formulate my questions with the help of Roy Rosenzweig's and David Thelen's book, *The Presence of the Past*. Rosenzweig and Thelen used a series of surveys from the Institute of Social Research in Bloomington, Indiana, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, to discover "how people understand and use the past in their everyday lives."<sup>56</sup> I followed Rosenzweig and Thelen's method to formulate my questions for both site employees and visitors. Rosenzweig and Thelen used a method of asking "broadly framed questions" but believed that questions which received a "yes and no" answer would still help overall research of how people felt about history or "past-related activities."<sup>57</sup>

The second chapter consists of interviews with historic site staff. Over an eight month period, I contacted more than one hundred historic sites asking to interview anyone who had regular visitor contact. Thirty-five workers, several from the same site, returned written responses, allowed for an interview on site, or responded via phone conversation. Ten questions were asked of each participant. The questions asked how

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<sup>56</sup> Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen. *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*. Methodological Appendix. <http://chnm.gmu.edu/survey/procedures.html>.

<sup>57</sup> Rosenzweig and Thelen. <http://chnm.gmu.edu/survey/procedures.html>.

the respondent felt regarding the ethics of reconstructing a historical building, either on their site or another, and addressed other issues involving the reconstruction process itself and its purposes. I tried to focus on locations that have buildings that were reconstructed or relocated after 1930.

The third chapter consists of visitor interviews conducted at Red Hill plantation, Patrick Henry's home near Brookneal, Virginia. Patrick Henry's home was a one and a half story building originally built in the 1770s and reconstructed in 1957. In 1986, the site was designated by Congress as the Patrick Henry National Memorial. The site, however, does not receive any federal funds and is run by the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation. From December 5, 2009, to March 1, 2010, site employees and I handed out surveys (see appendix for a full survey form) to visitors at Red Hill. During this time, twenty-eight surveys, out of the fifty-eight distributed, were sent back to me.<sup>58</sup>

The reconstruction of historical buildings, in my opinion, must be on a case-to-case basis. If a historic site decides to reconstruct it needs the following four steps. First, accept *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historical Properties: Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historical Buildings*. Second, the historical building being reconstructed should be the main supporting building(s) within the story of the site such as the McLean House at Appomattox Court House NHP. Third, a copious amount of information on the structure, including paintings, pictures, archeology, blue prints, etc., should be required before

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<sup>58</sup> Mark Couvillon, *Patrick Henry's Virginia: A Guide to the Homes and Sites in the Life of an American Patriot*, 2001; Support buildings for the plantation include slave quarters, smokehouse, greenhouse, ice house, law office, tobacco curing barn, carriage house, blacksmith shop and kitchen. When Patrick Henry passed away in the house in 1799, the plantation stayed within the Henry family. Sections were added on in 1833 by John Henry and in 1911. In 1919, the Henry House burned to the ground and was reconstructed in 1957 with private funds.

reconstruction can commence. Fourth, if the decision was made to reconstruct, the necessary money for the reconstruction and for the resultant building's long term maintenance must always be committed and continued. Without all the information, without the proper amount of money, and without the original structure being a primary historical location, I would be completely opposed to reconstruction.

With the scholarly and professional views of historical reconstruction assessed and the history of preservation and reconstruction standards in the United States explored, its time to find out what site employees and visitors think concerning the pros and cons of reconstructing historical buildings. Within the following chapters, queries of site employees and visitors will provide insight into the thoughts and feelings of these long neglected sources of opinion on the subject.

## Chapter Two- Site Worker Interviews

In chapter one, we explored the history of professionals' and scholars' thinking on the reconstruction of historical buildings. Chapter two reports on interviews from historical site employees who had or were currently working with the public at sites that have reconstructed or were in the process of reconstructing historical structures. Middle to upper level personnel at historical sites throughout the country decide what they will interpret, how they will interpret the historical information, and what buildings they will preserve for the public. The discussion and decisions over reconstructing historical buildings are implemented at this level. In this chapter the focus will be on questions sent by email or phone as well as site interviews at historic locations.

Initially around one-hundred twenty-five historical sites were contacted. This included local, state, non-profit and federal historical sites all across the country. After sending out letters and emails to all of the sites, thirty-six responded via phone, e-mail and or face to face interviews, with multiple interviewees at some sites. The chapter is divided into three main sections. First, the author discusses those sites and their employees who evince a pro-reconstruction attitude and their reasons for supporting said reconstruction. Secondly, informants at the sites who said that it depended on the situation as to how they would feel about reconstructing historical buildings. Third, site employees who remain anti-reconstruction in outlook are allowed to explain their viewpoints and opinions on the matter.



For historical sites I interviewed individuals from or about thirty-three sites in person, by phone, email and on-site. In some cases, multiple persons from the same site responded. Sites were spread out all over the country. The sites included:

Site Name	Operated By	Location
Hickory Hill and the Tom Watson Birthplace	non-profit Watson-Brown Foundation	Thompson, GA
Old Sturbridge Village	private group	Sturbridge, MA
Pennsbury Manor	State of PA	Morrisville, PA
Valley Forge National Historical Park	National Park Service	Valley Forge, PA
Fort Stanwix National Monument	National Park Service	Rome, NY
Bent's Old Fort National Historical Site	National Park Service	La Junta, CO
Antietam National Battlefield	National Park Service	Sharpsburg, MD
San Antonio Missions National Historical Park	National Park Service	San Antonio, TX
Alamance Battleground State Historic Site	State of North Carolina	Burlington, NC
Jamestown Site at Colonial National Historical Park	National Park Service/APVA or Preservation Virginia	Williamsburg, VA
Herbert Hoover National Historical Site	National Park Service	West Branch, IA
Fort King George State Park	State of Georgia	Darien, GA
Fort Halifax State Park	State of Maine	Winslow, ME
Montpelier: The Home of Henry Knox	non-profit	Thomaston, ME
Wade House	State of Wisconsin and a non-profit group	Greenbush, WI
Morristown National Historical Park	National Park Service	Morristown, NJ
Mackinac State Historical Site	State of Michigan	Mackinaw, MI

George Washington Birthplace National Monument	National Park Service	Washington's Birthplace, VA
Cahokia Courthouse State Historical Site	State of Illinois	Cahokia, IL
Ocmulgee National Monument	National Park Service	Macon, GA
Grand Village Indian Mounds	State of Mississippi	Natchez, MS
Champion Hill Civil War Battlefield	State of Mississippi	Raymond, MS
Assembly Hall	State of Mississippi	Washington, MS
Fort Dobbs State Historic Site	State of North Carolina	Statesville, NC
Wright Tavern in Rockingham	Run by the local government and Rockingham County Historical Society	Wentworth, NC
North West Co. Fur Post	private/ non-profit	Pine City, MN
Fort Loudoun State Historic Area	State of Tennessee	Vonore, TN
Fort Fredrick State Park	State of Maryland	Fredrick, MD
Martin House Restoration	Martin House Restoration Corporation (MHRC)/Non-profit	Buffalo, NY
Tryon Palace State Historic Site	State of North Carolina	New Burn, NC
Appomattox Court House National Historical Park	National Park Service	Appomattox, VA
Amherst Museum	Non-Profit	Amherst, NY

Breaking down the sites, there were six non-profit sites, eleven National Park sites, thirteen state run sites, one local government run site, one run jointly half state and half private non-profit (Wade House) and one run jointly half federal and half private non-profit (Jamestown and Preservation Virginia or APVA). In the interview process I talked

to twenty-eight men and seven women. Most had worked with the public on some level, if not at their current historical site then at another. The sites were spread throughout nineteen states including: four sites in North Carolina; three sites each in Mississippi, Virginia, and New York; two sites each in Maine, Maryland and Pennsylvania; and one each in West Virginia, Tennessee, Minnesota, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, Wisconsin, Iowa, Colorado, Texas and Massachusetts. Most of the sites are east of the Mississippi River.

The first question for the site employees was, “At your site you have reconstructed buildings. Please give some background on the site and why the park reconstructed the building/buildings.” The second survey question was, “Do you believe it was ethical to reconstruct this building or buildings?” When I started my research I looked at the ethics of reconstructing historical structures. But as time went on through the interview process, ethics, in the abstract, was not what I found. Rather it was how those individuals felt about the reconstruction of historical buildings. After the interviews were complete most site interviewees gave their personal opinion on reconstruction and not on the ethics aspect. On several occasions I was asked for a definition of ethics. Several questioned what ethics had to do with reconstruction, because standards are in place. I thought it was fair to respond: If a site does decide to reconstruct a historical building(s) I believe that if there is a plan (a method that the site follows), sufficient funds for the project and for maintenance, and the site abides by the DOI standards for reconstructing a historical building then the ethical standards for the field are being followed. Ethics are the basis of standards for a field of study and without them standards would not exist.

Out of the thirty-six individuals that answered the question, “is it ethical to reconstruct a historical building,” twenty-eight said yes, four said it depended on the circumstances and four said reconstruction was wrong, period. Ten other questions were asked, but for the sake of brevity most of the information will be taken from questions one and two.

This first section discusses the site interviews that had pro-reconstruction views. I will start with the reconstruction of the McLean House at Appomattox Court House National Historical Park (APCO). The Raine family bought the property in 1845 that sat toward the center of the town of Appomattox Court House and built a two story wooden tavern that was completed in 1846.<sup>59</sup> With the increase traffic on the Lynchburg-Richmond Stage Road the Raine family decided to build a guesthouse for additional space for guests. In 1848, the Raine Tavern Guesthouse (the future McLean House) was completed.<sup>60</sup> In 1854, the Southside railroad was build three miles to the west of the town diminishing stage traffic on the Lynchburg-Richmond Stage Road. By 1857 the Raines closed up the tavern and guesthouse and placed it on the market. Mr. Wilmer McLean bought the house in 1863 and he lived there with his wife and children. After the surrender in April of 1865, the McLeans lived in the house until 1867 when McLean defaulted on loans and the bank took the house. In 1891 M.E. Dunlap, of Niagara Falls, New York, bought the McLean House from the Ragland family, its owners then, with the

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<sup>59</sup> In the early 1810s the Lynchburg-Richmond Stage Road was built through the area becoming the main road from Richmond, VA to Lynchburg, VA. The area became known as Clover Hill in 1819 when the Patteson family built the Clover Hill Tavern for travelers on the Lynchburg-Richmond Stage Road. In 1845 the State of Virginia created Appomattox County because the citizens in the area that would become Appomattox County had long distances to their county seats. Clover Hill was chosen for the county seat of the new county and soon after the name of the town was changed to Appomattox Court House. By 1860 around sixty buildings and around one hundred to one hundred twenty people lived in the town.

<sup>60</sup>The Raine Tavern Guesthouse (McLean House) is a Federal/Greek revival brick three story, six room thirty-three hundred square foot building. Architect unknown.

intention of dismantling the house and taking it to Washington, D.C., to turn the house into a Civil War museum. In 1892, the Appomattox Land Company (Dunlap's company) dismantled the McLean House. The economic Panic of 1893 put the Appomattox Company out of business leaving the completely dismantled house to deteriorate for forty-seven years on its original site. In 1935, Congress officially made the site Appomattox Court House National Monument under the National Park Service (in 1954 changing the designation to be a National Historical Park). After purchasing the blue prints and photographs from the son of M.E. Dunlap, archeological research conducted in 1940-41, and finding historical photographs of the site, reconstruction of the McLean House started in 1947. The house was completed in 1949 and dedicated in 1950. Other buildings such as the McLean Well House, Icehouse, Kitchen, and Slave Quarters were reconstructed between 1950 to 1968.<sup>61</sup>

Today APCO does not have any plan for reconstructing the rest of the village. The park already has placed signs where buildings were located and in the future may create outlines where buildings once stood. But how do the current workers at the park feel about the reconstruction of historical buildings? Historian Patrick Schroeder, Curator Joe Williams, and Head of Maintenance John Spangler all offered their opinion on the subject of reconstructing historical buildings. Schroeder stated that reconstructions "undoubtedly" are ethical.<sup>62</sup> Williams stated, "Very selectively, but yes, if the public good outweighs both the immediate and long-term cost, and the structure

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<sup>61</sup> Appomattox Court House National Historical Park, National Register of Historical Places Registration Form, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, May 19, 1989; *Appomattox Court House National Historical Park*. <http://www.nps.gov/apco/parkmgmt/index.htm>; *Historic Structures at Appomattox Court House*. <http://www.nps.gov/apco/historyculture/historic-structures-at-appomattox-court-house.htm>.

<sup>62</sup> Patrick Schroeder, e-mail to author, 2/19/2009. Historian/Author Patrick Schroeder is currently working as historian at Appomattox Court House NHP.

was integral to important historic events. Education of future generations about important historical events. Is there a lesson that is important for society to remember - ie. peace and reunification, rising above differences?"<sup>63</sup> Spangler stated:

Ethics, what does that have to do with anything? The question should be what important role did the building/ buildings have in history, if any. If the building/ buildings played a significant role then yes, it's ethical. If the role was minimal, then how does it contribute to surrounding area, buildings, structures, ethnographic etc? If it's just an old building and you already have ten, then no. The answer is that there are so many variables that it's hard to give a straight answer without one looking at the complete situation of each building/ buildings in question. We as Americans view certain times in our history as important events that should be captured in time for perpetuity. And if a building is part of that event?<sup>64</sup>

Michelle Zupan is Curator at Hickory Hill and the Tom Watson Birthplace, run by the Watson-Brown Foundation, a nonprofit Georgia corporation, located in Thomson, Georgia. The Watson-Brown Foundation operates three house museums: Hickory Hill, the Thomas E. Watson House and the Tom Watson Birth Place. Senator Thomas E. Watson (1865-1922) was a lawyer, elected to the Georgia House of Representatives, both U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, and writer. In 1900, he purchased Hickory Hill and passed it at his death to his two granddaughters.<sup>65</sup>

In March 1, 2007, a tornado at Hickory Hill destroyed the Smoke House and Delco shed buildings and damaged the corn crib. Zupan stated that,

We have repaired the corncrib using as many original bricks and timbers as possible. The smokehouse was reconstructed with many of the original bricks, closely following the original lines and mortar composition. The

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<sup>63</sup> Joe Williams, e-mail to author, 2/18/2009. Joe Williams is currently the Chief of Museum Services and Curator at Appomattox Court House NHP.

<sup>64</sup> John Spangler, email to author, 2/19/2009. John Spangler is currently the Chief of Maintenance and Facility Manager Appomattox Court House NHP.

<sup>65</sup> Michelle Zupan, email to author, February 2, 2009. Michelle Zupan is currently the Curator at Hickory Hill and the Tom Watson Birthplace.

Delco shed, a frame structure, has not yet been rebuilt as we are still researching its original location – we know it was moved at least once, possibly twice, in the last 60 years.<sup>66</sup>

When answering the question of whether or not it is ethical to reconstruct, Zupan said “yes” because of the materials and information that were available.<sup>67</sup>

The Dunker Church, located near Sharpsburg, Maryland, was built between 1852 and 1853 by the Dunkers, a sect of German Baptist Brethren, on the property of Samuel Mumma. During the Battle of Antietam, September 17, 1862, the building sustained heavy damage and was used as a hospital. After the battle the church was repaired and used as a church through the turn of the twentieth century. After the Dunkers moved their congregation to a new building, the building was left to deteriorate. In 1921, in its weakened state, the Dunker Church was destroyed by a wind storm. A building was subsequently built on the Dunker Church site and was used as a gas station and store. The store was taken down by the Washington County Historical Society 1951 and the property given to the NPS soon after. In 1961, the National Park Service reconstructed the building utilizing some of the original materials on the original site. The church was ready for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Antietam/Sharpsburg in 1962.<sup>68</sup>

Jane Custer, of Cultural Resource Division at Antietam National Battlefield, stated that the reconstruction was ethical because:

This structure is the only church within the area that is Antietam National Battlefield and the reconstruction was based on historic documentation therefore I do believe it was ethical. The documentary evidence and some

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<sup>66</sup>Michelle Zupan, email to author, February 2, 2009.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, email to author, February 2, 2009.

<sup>68</sup> *The Dunker Church on the Antietam National Park Website.*  
<http://www.nps.gov/anti/historyculture/dunkerchurch.htm>.

physical evidence permitted an accurate reconstruction with little conjecture. If there had been another church surviving within the battlefield, I don't think having this reconstruction would be as important. For example at Antietam National Battlefield we have eight different farms and each farm varies in the number of existing historic structures. Several have many historic outbuildings which were essential to farming in the 1860s, others do not, but because the effects of the battle on the local farm families can be told at one site, not all need to have outbuildings.<sup>69</sup>

Dennis Frye, the Chief Historian at Harpers Ferry who worked at Antietam years before, explained that the Dunker Church was blown over in a hail storm. Fry related that when he was 13 years old, he volunteered at Antietam National Battlefield, giving tours at Dunker Church and telling the story of the reconstruction. "They were fascinated by the story of what happened to the building," stated Frye. Visitors "always wanted to know what was original in the church...They would connect with that instantly. The first thirteen floor boards in the church are original." Frye would see people go back and step on those boards. "Their soul was connected literally through the sole of their foot with the soul of history at that point."<sup>70</sup> Somewhere around 3,000 of the original bricks are within the walls of the reconstructed Dunker Church. Frye states, "...it's real history, because it's a real connection to the place and time." Frye believes that a reconstruction is the right thing to do in this situation, because even if there remains only a very small percentage of the original building, "the whole thing becomes real to them...think of how much more effective it is to have...those three thousand bricks part of the church rather

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<sup>69</sup> Jane Custer email to author May 20, 2008; List of Classified Structures, Cultural Resources Division [www.hscl.cr.nps.gov/insidenps/report.asp](http://www.hscl.cr.nps.gov/insidenps/report.asp). Jane Custer is currently Chief of the Cultural Resource Division at Antietam National Park.

<sup>70</sup> Dennis Fry interview, April 8, 2008. 1:40-1:55. Dennis Fry is currently Chief of Interpretation at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.



than two or three bricks on display in a museum case. Where no one can touch it...it has no context. Here is a brick from the Dunker Church.”<sup>71</sup>

Fort Halifax in Winslow, Maine, is one of the oldest blockhouses in the United States. The fort was built on the bank of the Kennebec River in 1754 to protect English settlers against attacks during the French and Indian War (1754-1763). The National Register of Historic Places Inventory states that original fort “ was square in shape” and had three palisade blockhouses set on the neighboring hill.<sup>72</sup> After the war, the fort seemed to be abandoned despite its stout construction. By the time the Fort Halifax Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) in 1924 got hold of the property, the only part of the fort left was one block house. After the restoration the DAR owned the property until 1965 when the group gave the property to the State of Maine’s Bureau of Parks and Recreation. In 1987, a flood destroyed what remained of the blockhouse. According to Tim Hall, regional director, Maine Department of

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<sup>71</sup> Fry interview, 6:05-7:16.

<sup>72</sup> Fort Halifax Blockhouse, National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form. <http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NHLS/Text/68000015.pdf>; National Register of Historic Places view on “Criteria Considerations : Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 year shall not be considered eligible for the National Register. However, such properties will qualify if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria or if they fall within the following categories: a. A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or b. A building or structure removed from its original location but which is primarily significant for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historical person or event; or c. A birthplace or grave of historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate or building directly associated with his or her productive life; or d. A cemetery which derives its primary importance from grave of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or e. A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or f. A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance; or g. A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance, Frequently Asked Questions. <http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/faq.html>.

Conservation, “we went and chased timbers following the flood and we did not retrieve all the timbers. The decision was made to reconstruct the blockhouse using original timbers that we found and other timbers that were hewed to replace missing timbers.”<sup>73</sup> When I asked Hall how he felt about the reconstruction, he stated that it was “absolutely” ethical to reconstruct the blockhouse:

The blockhouse at Fort Halifax was on the town’s seal. It is an icon of that community. That community demanded that we rebuilt the blockhouse. So I mean it was under...intense public pressure...we reconstructed that blockhouse even though we knew that there was historical criticism about it and we faced the possibility of it [being] stricken from the National Register and it just had to be done.<sup>74</sup>

Bent’s Old Fort, located in La Junta, Colorado, built between 1832 and 1834, by Charles Bent and Ceran St. Vrain. The fort was built to trade with Plains Indians and trappers. The adobe structure until 1849 was the only major permanent white settlement on the Santa Fe Trail between Missouri and the Mexican settlements. During the Mexican War (1846-1848) the site was used as a military hospital and a location to store military supplies. An explosion that partially burned it, sickness, and other reasons caused Bent’s Old Fort to be abandoned in the late 1840s. Between the late 1840s until 1920 the buildings of the fort were used for the Barlow-Sanderson and Express Company as a repair shop, cattle corrals, and materials were taken by local ranchers. The Daughters of the American Revolution took over 4.5 acres of the fort in 1920. In 1954, the Fort was taken over by the State of Colorado, and the National Park Service took it over on June 3, 1960, as a National Historical Site. The Park Service was responsible for

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<sup>73</sup> Tim Hall interview, August 12, 2008, 7:15-7:38; *Fort Halifax on the Kennebec*, Department of Conservation, State of Maine Website. <http://www.maine.gov/doc/parks/history/forthalifax/index.htm>. Tim Hall is now retired, but at the time was Regional Manager for the Maine Bureau of Park and Recreation.

<sup>74</sup> Tim Hall interview, 8:59-9:30.

the research that eventually led to reconstructing the historical fort. Greg Holt, Park Ranger stated that Bent's Old Fort was reconstructed in 1976 to its original appearance by using "sketches, archeology and a journal. Local and regional ambition fueled its reconstruction,"<sup>75</sup> especially after the Park Service deemed the site "nationally significant."<sup>76</sup> Holt believes that the reconstruction was ethical "because there is good documentation and the building was of a very unique character and function."<sup>77</sup>

San Antonio Mission, in San Antonio, Texas, did something every similar to Appomattox Court House and reconstructed only the most important building. In 1718 Franciscan missionaries and Spanish representatives arrived at the San Antonio River and established the first mission. By 1730, four missions (Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña, Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo, Mission San Juan Capistrano, Mission San Francisco de la Espada were built in the area to Christianize the native population. In 1960, the National Park Service officially took over the site. Steve Whitesell, Superintendent at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, states that San Antonio Mission:

Contains four 18th century Spanish Colonial missions and associated site features including irrigation systems, neophyte quarters, granaries, etc. Most of the four mission sites are preserved ruins. Mission San Jose, the largest of the four missions, was reconstructed in the 1930s by the Works Progress Administration. The buildings were reconstructed in order to show how a mission compound would have looked historically. I believe the decision to restore was likely made, consistent with thinking of the

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<sup>75</sup> Greg Holt, email to author, February 19, 2008. Greg Holt is currently a Interpretative Park Ranger at Bent's Old Fort National Historical Site.

<sup>76</sup> Greg Holt email to author, February 9, 2008.

<sup>77</sup> Greg Holt email to author, February 9, 2008; Bent's Old Fort or Fort Williams, National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form. [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/beol/beol\\_nr.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/beol/beol_nr.pdf); *Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site Website*. <http://www.nps.gov/beol/historyculture/index.htm>.

time, because visitors would have a hard time understanding the complexity of the site without a physical recreation.<sup>78</sup>

Whitesell states that he feels that the reconstruction was ethical, but because the Mission was reconstructed in the 1930s “I don't believe it is possible for preservationists today to fully understand the thought process and conceptual framework that individuals were working through 70 years ago.”<sup>79</sup>

At Jamestown on May 13, 1607, one hundred four men and boys arrived from England. Soon after these travelers built a fort for protection against the local Indians and named it after King James I of England. Eventually the colony grew, the capital moved to Williamsburg, and, over time, the fort disappeared. For a long time many people believed that the fort had been swept into the James River over the years. But recently the Preservation Virginia (APVA) archeology discovered that the fort site is still mostly above water; the old interpretation of the site's location was incorrect. William Kelso, Director of Research and Interpretation for APVA, at the Jamestown site, explains that:

Archaeologists reconstructed a mud and stud frame in 2006 based on archaeological postholes and research in England. Reason: experimental archaeology and to give visitors some scale to the site of 1607 James Fort the remnants of which are basically only holes in the ground. We stopped at only a frame because of future maintenance problems. It's a split site half National Park Service and half state of Virginia.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Steve Whitesell email to author, March 10, 2008; Steve Whitesell at the time was Superintendent at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, but now is Associate Director, Park Planning, Facilities & Lands in the NPS Washington Office.

<sup>79</sup> Steve Whitesell email to author, March 10, 2008; *Mission San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo*, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park Website.  
<http://www.nps.gov/saan/historyculture/sanjosehistory1.htm>.

<sup>80</sup> William Kelso email to author, July 31, 2008; William Kelso is currently the Director of Research and Interpretation in Archaeology at Jamestown.

Kelso does believe that the reconstruction of the fort and the 1907 reconstructed church to be ethical.<sup>81</sup>

Hebert Hoover, the thirty-first President of the United States, was born in 1874 in a two-room home in West Branch, Iowa. His family, especially his father, a local blacksmith, helped start the community. Several years after Hoover was born his father sold the blacksmith shop; it was later moved to another part of West Branch, and was subsequently torn down in the 1890's. According to Cary Wiesner, Historian at Herbert Hoover National Historical Site,

The blacksmith shop was first proposed in a 1948 Master Plan prepared for the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society, which at that time managed the park. It was given a low priority at the time. In 1954 Herbert Hoover's son Alan informed the society that the Hoover family was against building a reconstruction blacksmith shop since there was 'no authentic print or plan in existence.' In early 1955 former President Hoover withdrew his opposition to the proposal to build a blacksmith shop, provided 'there was no attempt to at an original restoration since everyone seems to have forgotten it, but merely a sample of what a typical one of that vintage used to be.' Construction was completed in 1957. At that time a sign 'Jesse Hoover Blacksmith' was placed on the front façade, even though the shop was not intended to be a replica of Jesse's shop. (Apparently the Hoovers did not object).<sup>82</sup>

To add to this Neil Korsmo, Chief Ranger at the site, stated that the reason it was important for the reconstruction was that "the blacksmith shop was reconstructed by the Hoover family when the site was still privately held because Herbert Hoover's father was a blacksmith, and lessons learned by Herbert at his father's blacksmith shop guided him his whole life. The symbolism was important to the Hoover family. Numerous other

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<sup>81</sup> William Kelso email to author, July 31, 2008.

<sup>82</sup> Cary Wiesner email to author, February 20, 2008. Cary Wiesner is currently the Historian at Herbert Hoover National Historic Site.

buildings were moved onto the site to help with interpretation of the site.”<sup>83</sup> Both felt that the reconstruction was ethical. Wiesner wrote, “yes, except for the sign, since the idea was to show a typical blacksmith shop rather than specifically Hoover’s father’s, and since blacksmith shop buildings were generally vernacular and did not seem to follow a standard size or floor plan.”<sup>84</sup> Korsmo wrote that the historical reconstruction helps “to provide the interpretive site [the ability] to discuss thoughts, ideas, and values. Also to give people a chance to see a side of life that was very important at the time, but is essentially lost now.”<sup>85</sup>

Fort King George, along the Altamaha River, in what is now Darien, Georgia, was built in 1721 by colonists from South Carolina to guard against Spanish attack. Six years later they abandoned the fort. Ten years later the town of Darien was created on the site under the eyes of General James Oglethorpe and a group of Highland Scots, and soon the fort was forgotten. According to Steve Smith, Fort King George’s Site Manager, Betsy Lewis began researching the site in the 1920s and 1930s, eventually becoming the fort’s historian. Lewis “started her own research about Fort King George and, through using archives, descriptions, period maps, she was able to pinpoint exactly where the fort originally was...”<sup>86</sup> Eventually she would influence the state of Georgia to buy the site and have archeology conducted on it. The site lacked buildings for many years.

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<sup>83</sup> Neil Korsmo email to author, February 2, 2008. Neil Korsmo is retire but at the time was Chief Ranger at Herbert Hoover National Historic Site.

<sup>84</sup> Cary Wiesner email to author, February 20, 2008.

<sup>85</sup> Neil Korsmo email to author, February 2, 2008; The Reconstruction of the Blacksmith Shop, Construction, Maintenance & Landscaping, 1939-1970, The Hoover Houses and Community Structures: Historic Structures Report. [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/heho/hsr/chap1h.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/heho/hsr/chap1h.htm).

<sup>86</sup> Steve Smith Interview, June 3, 2008, 4:30-4:45. Steve Smith is currently Site Manager at Fort King George Historic Site a Georgia state site.

According to Smith, “visitation was very poor and not a lot of people were exposed to the fort” then:

in 1986... the Lower Albemarle Historical Society approached the manager at that time his name was Ken Akin. And they talked about raising money to reconstruct not the entire fort, but just the block house which was the main structure of the fort...throughout 1986-1987, the historical society became heavily involved in raising money to build the blockhouse and the agreement was whatever they raised the state would match...they were able to raise something in the neighborhood about \$50,000 to \$80,000. The state matched and they were able to construct the blockhouse. And that was 1988...And from 1988 on up to 1994 visitation to the site remarkable increased. And it's something we've documented and in this case demonstrated to a lot of people that you know resources development of more cultural resources at a site obviously attracts more people. Since the site was making more money exponentially as a result of the blockhouse. School visitation increased. Around 1998-1999, Senator Kemp was our state Senator, he got really interested in raising money or petitioning the state legislature to give money to finish out the construction of the fort. ..the soldier's barracks, the officers barracks, and the guard house...Kemp was successfully able to get the state legislature to give us [money] for those structures. The soldier's barracks were built in 2000. The officer's barracks and guard house were both completed in 2002...the fort is now 100% complete.<sup>87</sup>

The reconstruction was done with sketches and blueprints that were drawn by Colonel John Barnwell.<sup>88</sup> When asked how Smith felt on the ethical point of reconstructing a historical building, he stated that,

I've gotten into debates with a couple of people who work in our division. Historical sites who feel that way it's unethical. You can't prove that you know the fort was built out of exactly those specific materials and should not build it at all. I got into an argument with a re-enactor one time who tried to argue we shouldn't have our [uniforms] displayed out there

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<sup>87</sup> Steve Smith Interview, June 3, 2008, 6:00-11:30.

<sup>88</sup> Colonial John Barnwell (1671-1724) born in Ireland who came to the Colony of South Carolina in the late 1690s-1700. He helped build the outpost on Fort King George on the Altamaha River and work on Indian affairs with the Yamasee.

because it's not one hundred percent accurate. So my attitude is if you don't put it in the public eye then there's no avenue...to explore the past. They have no... resource to...engage them in the past and makes them want to understand it better...by taking the fort away...so many people who aren't going to come here to ask the question why is this here? And what's this time period like?...And it also intrigues people and makes people want to learn more. Makes people want to come and see it. And again I think a lot of people who find that unethical are people who just ... I think they find it unethical for a lot of personal reasons rather than professional reasons.<sup>89</sup>

The Wade House located in the town of Greenbush, Wisconsin, was created in the mid-1840s before the state came into the Union in 1848. It was a town on a stage road with several stores, a school, blacksmith shop and a sawmill. The Herrling sawmill, operated by Theodore Herrling, was an important part of this community. When the railroad was built away from the town in 1860s, the town, like Appomattox Court House, started to decline. Soon only a few people lived in the town, and buildings started disappearing into history. David Simmons, Site Director at Wade House, said that the desire to reconstruct the sawmill dates back over fifty years. The ruin of the dam was all that was left when Marie and Ruth Kohler, of the Kohler Foundation, decided to restore the Wade Home as it was in the 1850s. The Kohlers' dream of reconstructing the sawmill did not happen until the 1980s. With information from photographs, documents, and the archeology, Simmons stated:

All those things combined with some considerable outside funding to reconstruct the mill very similar to the one that existed here...A sawmill an up and down saw mill at this...location on the Mullet River was a critical component to the development of this little hamlet of Greenbush. And it's very closely allied and tied to the choice of this site for the settlement by the Wade family. And they were the first settlers here and they chose a site where there was a good head...of water so he

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<sup>89</sup> Steve Smith Interview June 3, 2008, 12:30-15:29.



could...have a sawmill. So far for...those reasons...I think it makes good sense to go on and have the reconstruction [done].<sup>90</sup>

When it came down to how Simmons felt about reconstructions he stated, “yea.”

<sup>91</sup>

Fort Loudoun was built during the French and Indian War (1754-1763) to protect western South Carolina from threats in the Mississippi River and protect trade routes between the Cherokee Nation and South Carolina. Four years later, after relations between the Cherokee and South Carolina broke down, the Cherokee captured the fort and, after the British left, destroyed it. The site was never used again for military purposes. According to Jeff Wells, Park Manager of Fort Loudoun State Historic Site, in:

...1933 when the site was set aside by the state of Tennessee as a historic area and initially of course there were archeological remains there were archeological excavations that took place at the site under the WPA New Deal organization that worked here in East Tennessee. The site was operated all those years by the Fort Loudon Association which was a group of private citizens that organized themselves to run the site on behalf of the state of Tennessee. All along their goal was to reconstruct the fort. Fort Loudon Association ran the site for forty years and during that time period did reconstruct the palisades, the outer line of wooden wall...and the powder magazine I believe. But for forty years they were never able to do any more than that. Now I had mentioned the location of the fort being alongside a river. In the 1960s, the Tennessee Valley Authority proposed a dam on the Little Tennessee River. Tellico Dam. Because of its rather odd hillside location the lower portion of the fort would be inundated by the waters of Tellico Lake because after this free flowing mountain stream is backed up it creates a lake and the fort was going to be or half of the fort was going to be flooded underwater...So with that understood there was actually a third round of archeology, there was a second round of archeology that I failed to mention in the late 1950s... And also along that time same time period in the 1960s Fort Loudoun was placed on the National Register of Historical Places. So there was some measure of protection if you will but that did not really per sway the Tennessee Valley Authority from going on and finishing this dam...Well as I stated the lower portion of the fort would be underwater

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<sup>90</sup> David Simmons, Wade House Interview, 8:15-9:30. David Simmons is currently the Site Director at Wade House one of the Wisconsin Historic Sites.

<sup>91</sup> David Simmons, Wade House Interview, 10:00-10:05.

so there this great debate how do we save the fort?... the Tennessee Valley Authority created a backfill lack of a better word over the archeological remains at a depth of seventeen feet. So where we trod now by latitude and longitude the correct location of the fort but by elevation its seventeen feet above sea level higher than it was...“When the decision was finalized that the lake would come in and the site would have to be elevated the Tennessee Valley Authority a federal agency said well we will come back then and restore it to the visually state that it was in. So now were built the site up by seventeen feet the Tennessee Valley Authority comes back in rebuilds the fort palisades, all be it seventeen feet higher and the powder magazine...and built a museum as well a visitor center. And then that was the state of the site when Tennessee State Parks took over in the late 1970s.<sup>92</sup>

Asked for his feeling about the reconstruction of these building, he stated “yes.” Wells went on to say that when “I talk to visitors I make it very clear that it’s a reconstruction.”<sup>93</sup> The site managers stated that a certain number of buildings could be reconstructed after the Tennessee Valley Authority did their share. All the research had been done on the buildings that would be reconstructed prior to the back fill. Wells states that living history and education are important uses for the reconstructed buildings.<sup>94</sup>

In 1804, a fur trader and some of his workers of the North West Trading Company started the journey from Fort Saint Louis, now modern day Superior, Wisconsin, all the way to what is now just a few miles past what is now Pine City, Minnesota. At this location the fur traders built several houses, store houses and a shop to be able to trade all fall and winter. The traders went up and down the Snake River and traded furs with the Ojibwa, the local Indians. After spending eight months in this area the traders went back to Fort St. Louis never to return to the site again. A short time later the site burned. In the 1960s, archeologists excavated the site and the Minnesota Historical Society opened the location as a historical site. According to Patrick

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<sup>92</sup> Jeff Wells Interview March 18, 2008, 3:23-8:32. Jeff Wells is currently Park Manager at Fort Loudoun.

<sup>93</sup> Jeff Wells Interview March 18, 2008, 10:20-11:00.

<sup>94</sup> Jeff Wells Interview March 18, 2008, 10:20-11:00.

Schifferdecker, Site Manager, North West Co. Fur Post, the information to reconstruct the buildings came from the “archeology, there was a journal kept by the trader here, also there are some contemporary water colors of other posts, not of this particular post and there is pictorial and archival research as well as the archeology.” When asked how Schifferdecker felt about the reconstruction of the trading village, “anyone who does history...you write a book you’re reconstructing history based on the documentation...Those people who argue against reconstruction probably should argue against doing any history at all.”<sup>95</sup>

Built in 1816 by James Wright, the Wright Tavern was constructed in Rockingham County’s seat, Wentworth, NC. For close to one hundred years the Wright and Reid families ran the tavern that had grown from one building to around twenty main or support buildings. By the time the Rockingham Historical Society took over the property in 1967, all but the main building had collapsed over time. Even the back part of the tavern had fallen down. According to Kitty Williams, Wright Tavern maintenance, Rockingham County Historical Society at Wright Tavern, “The first thing they [Rockingham Historical Society] did was to rebuild the L [back of the building]. And it looks basically like it did now except that they left out a set of stairs that went into the attic from the L.” Several nineteenth century buildings such as the corn crib and a smokehouse have been moved onto the property.<sup>96</sup> Williams stated pro or “yes” for

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<sup>95</sup> Patrick Schifferdecker Interview July 2, 2008. 2:15-7:55. Patrick Schifferdecker is currently the Site Manger at North West Co. Fur Post part of the Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>96</sup> Kitty Williams Interview March 11, 2008, 11:13-19:10. Kitty Williams is currently working at Wright Tavern Maintenance part of the Rockingham County Historical Society in NC.

rebuilding historical structures. She also had a very strong opinion in favor of historical landscaping and the importance of it to a historical site.<sup>97</sup>

Section two is about those who responded that it depends on the situation when it comes down to reconstructing historical buildings. Fort Stanwix, in what is now Rome, NY, was built by the British in 1758 to defend against French invasion during the French and Indian war. In 1774 the British abandoned the fort and left it to rot. During the American Revolution the Americans repaired and renamed the fort, Ft. Schuyler. After a flood and a fire destroyed that fort in 1781, nothing was done with the site until 1794 when a block house was built there. By 1815 the site was in disrepair and not in use. The City of Rome, New York, began to build over the site and in time it was forgotten. In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Wagner-Sisson Bill to create Fort Stanwix National Monument. In the 1960s in order to augment an urban renewal project, the city donated the land officially to the National Park Service. According to Mike Kusch, Fort Stanwix National Monument, Chief of Interpretation and Resource Management,

Yes, all of the buildings are reconstructed... Beginning in the early 1960s Rome's economy began to deteriorate. Heavy industries such as the steel, copper, iron and wire mills started to move away (rust belt era). Then the local Griffiss Air Force Base was realigned as technology changed. Support industries then moved as well. This realignment and relocation of support industries further dragged the local economy down. In an attempt to bring some industry/business back to Rome, local leaders decided to invest in heritage tourism. These leaders, not the community as a whole, approached the NPS about what could be done with the fort. Fort Stanwix National Monument was authorized in 1935, however it could not be reconstructed unless the land was donated to the NPS or the money to purchase the land was donated. The NPS deflected this request by

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<sup>97</sup> Kitty Williams Interview March 11, 2008, 19:13-19:47, 38:00-38:55.

referring to its policy of not reconstructing historic sites. These leaders then engaged the local House representative and its new Senator, Robert Kennedy, who was in the process of ramping up his presidential election and needed to garner votes in upstate New York because he elected by a narrow margin... By this point downtown Rome was depressed. There were vacant buildings and empty business fronts. The NPS conducted a study to explore various alternatives. The first was no action and provided only a modicum of support to the local historical society, the Fort Stanwix Museum which later became the Rome Historical Society. If remains of the fort existed, they were located behind the museum's building. The second alternative was to reconstruct a bastion of the fort, the flag bastion in particular, behind the museum and to provide a great NPS presence... The last alternative, and the one the NPS least wanted was to rebuild the fort. The local community leaders lobbied for this third alternative, and willingly destroyed their downtown during an urban renewal project and donated the land to the NPS. After the alternative selection a limited archeological investigation was conducted in the backyards of buildings and an astonishing amount of evidence of the fort was found. As the buildings were demolished, NPS archeologists investigated about 1/3 of the site and were able to confirm the dimensions of the fort as documented in 18th century architectural drawings and found significant evidence of the fort and its occupants, as well as a information about the people and structures through the late 18th to mid 20th centuries, notably, what I call, the canal era. The site was then cleared, with archeologists monitoring the work, and the fort reconstructed on its original foundation. The archeology and the first phase of reconstruction taking six years to complete. The fort was opened to the public for the nation's bicentennial. A second phase of construction took place in 1978. The third, and final phase was never completed. What visitors currently visit is a partially reconstructed fort, designed for living history demonstrations (along the lines of the Colonial Williamsburg model). The missing structures include the ravelin, guard house, headquarters, necessary, and communication (sally port).<sup>98</sup>

When asked if he thought it was ethical that historical buildings be reconstructed, his response was:

Depends. It depends on the sum of all the factors in making the decision. I, for one am not opposed to reconstructions because I see the value to interpretation and education. However, it must be done right and smartly.

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<sup>98</sup> Mike Kusch, email to author, February 18, 2008.

If the reconstruction threatens an adjacent historic structure, then no. If the reconstruction is done in a different location, no. If the reconstruction displaces people and business vital to the community's well being, no. &c. In Rome's case, the buildings in the worst condition were located on the site of Fort Stanwix.<sup>99</sup>

The Cahokia Courthouse was originally built about 1740 when the Illinois country was part of New France. In the early 1790s, when American settlers began to occupy the territory they changed the building from a home into a U.S. territorial Court House. When the county seat moved from Cahokia Court House, the Courthouse building was used as a city hall, school, saloon, and it was used to store farm machinery. In the early 1900s the building was purchased, dismantled and sent to St. Louis for the World's Fair in 1904. Molly McKenzie, Site Manager, Cahokia Courthouse State Historic Site Complex, in Cahokia, IL, stated that she believed the owner wanted to open a "beer concession. He was not given a permit to sell beer, so he opened it as an attraction where he talked about old timey ways of law and order."<sup>100</sup> After the fair closed in 1906 the Chicago Historical Society bought the property and sent it to Chicago. Though not destroyed, it was rehabilitated to be used as a Japanese tea room and other establishments until the Chicago Park Board took over. In the mid-1920s the town began to ask Chicago to give its building back. Eventually the state of Illinois gave the town back its old courthouse. According to McKenzie:

They [the town of Cahokia] first engaged the state museum in an archeological project to determine the original foundation location, shore those up in order to reassembling the building on its original foundation. That was the first paid professional archeological excavation in the state of Illinois. And the foundation had been left on the ground when it was first moved in 1901. So they brought the timbers back from Chicago, replaced where necessary, reassembled with the stone that was left on the site. Of

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<sup>99</sup> Mike Kusch, email to author, February 18, 2008.

<sup>100</sup> Mike Kusch, email to author, February 18, 2008.

course features like the roof had to be completely new materials and the interior was also reproduced in a like fashion. There were, they spent a lot of time researching and taking [information] from oral informants who were residents of the village who remember the building, who had lived in the building and so on. So they had a lot of oral informants on how the building appeared on the interior. Photographs of it from the 1890s that they used in the reassembly so they really were committed to doing the most accurate job possible on the building. And it was dedicated in 1940 to the splendid heritage of the citizens of Illinois.<sup>101</sup>

McKenzie goes on to say that her view on reconstructing of historical buildings depends on the time period and depends on the site.<sup>102</sup>

Ocmulgee National Monument, located in Macon, Georgia has a vast history of close to 9,000 years. Between 900 and 1200 AD, the Mississippians occupied the site. This group, called Macon Plateau, created seven mounds and sometime around 1000 AD there was an earth lodge that was the political, social, and spiritual center for the group. Over time the Mississippian culture disappeared as did the Earthen Lodge. In the early 1930s, when the town of Macon was using one of the mounds for fill dirt, several archaeologists asked the Smithsonian Institution to conduct extensive archeology in the Macon Plateau area. In 1936, after it became the largest archeological dig in the country up to that point, President Roosevelt created Ocmulgee National Park. One of the most important finds during the major archeological digs was a thousand year old lodge floor. According to Jim David, Superintendent of Ocmulgee National Monument:

We call that the Earth Lodge. And once again when they were doing archeological work here in the 1930s, they discovered this original one thousand year old floor that was very clear to be a meeting facility. They found a circular building circular floor with all these seats on it a bird shaped effigy located where the fire pit was and so forth and the floor was in amazingly good condition when the archeologist found it. And there

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<sup>101</sup> Molly McKenzie Interview, April 15, 2008 9:30-10:24. Molly McKenzie is currently Site Manager, Cahokia Courthouse State Historic Site Complex, IL.

<sup>102</sup> Molly McKenzie Interview, April 15, 2008 4:11-10:24.

for at that point through studying the logs and so forth that were laying down on top of the floor they were able to come up with a fairly good assumption...pretty good idea of the roof structure and very clearly also find out see were the entrance into the room and so forth were and so therefore ...[Ocmulgee NM] decided to try to portray what the interior of this structure look like. And all things I've read from the Archeology so forth I think they came up with a fairly fatefully portrayed of what the interior looked like. Because it was very evident were the four posts for the ceiling...and they were able to find enough evidence to figure out what type of weaving mat made up the sides of the entrance way and covered part of the roof structure. Now...from the exterior is probably very questionable. Back at that time they basically built a concrete structure over the original floor. Once again making the interior over top of the floor as accurate as they possible do. And decided to cover the whole thing in dirt. Now from...a plan structure report done on the Earth Lodge and the author of that said that most likely instead of a complete mound of earth like it is portrayed it probably had probably had the open sides that formed the walls but then it was probably a thatched roof that covered the structure not all earth like its portrayed now. Oh course we are aware that it did have to have a vent hole for the fireplace. Course there was no way to recreate that and still protect the original floor. For this case the interior, I always tell that to visitors that the interior is very faithful what they are seeing from the exterior is reconstructed. But there was really no I don't know of any good way they could have come up with to portray or still be able to show the original floor ...it can tell visitors that it is a unique one of a kind resource. That a number of mound sites that date back to the same period of the Mississippian age we are not the biggest or anything else, but of all the other Mississippian mound sites the other ones did find...lodges, but in no other case were the floors in such good condition that they were worth displaying. And with this one being basically intact this is the only place in the world that one can see that earth lodge floor with some type of earth lodge structure over top of it that would have not been possible.<sup>103</sup>

David's view of the reconstruction of the earth lodge and other historical sites seems to be a situational position.

I've worked at other parks that have reconstructions and its always highly debated as your thesis have been talking about. Now ...in this case with the earth lodge I don't think there was any other option. I think putting a modern building over the top would have made it look very funny. I think trying to do as faithful a reproduction as they could and still to be able to

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<sup>103</sup> Jim David Interview March 19, 2008 1:04-6:13. Jim David is currently Superintendent at Ocmulgee National Monument.



preserve the floor I think this method worked out the best. Once again...I think the archeologists were able to come up at least with the at least the interior how the roof situated .... I think they were able make it I believe pretty accurate from everything I've read and what there justification was. Now generally speaking I probably agree with the ...Park Service policy is that generally speaking if you don't have photographs or drawings I don't think that reconstructions normally be done. You can do a faithful reproduction then I have always been in favor of them and once again this one [earth lodge] I say once again its borderline, but in order for people be able to see this floor there was no other option.<sup>104</sup>

Fort Fredrick was built in 1756 to protect the western frontier of the Colony of Maryland from Indian attack. This stone structure held civilians during the French and Indian war and Pontiac's War of 1763, held British and German prisoners of the American Revolution and was garrisoned during the American Civil War. The fort, however, was never attacked or fired upon by the enemy. In 1922, the State of Maryland took over the fort and the wall surrounding it. In the 1930s the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) did work on the walls and the support buildings outside the fort walls. These support buildings were not historical buildings or based on any buildings. The barracks within the fort were reconstructed by the state in the 1970s. With archeology and extensive work on researching the site, Fort Fredrick now has the original layout and other information from the men who served in the fort over the years. Archeology in 1999 and 2000 suggested that the CCC destroyed a lot of the evidence of the past including taking a significant amount of artifacts as well. Ross Kimmel, Maryland State Historian, while interviewing at Fort Fredrick, discussed the history of the site, what the CCC did to the site and how the site intends to reconstruct in the future. To let the public know what was original wall and reconstructed by the CCC Kimmel stated that "...we purposely kept what is original of the wall with the whiter mortar and the darker

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<sup>104</sup> Jim David Interview March 19, 2008 7:11-8:54.

mortar what CCC used Portland Cement”<sup>105</sup> When asked how he felt about rebuilding historical buildings, Kimmel stated, “So the question is why are we spending money reconstructing buildings that have been gone for two centuries when there are standing structures that are begging. And the answer is no body makes that connection and it’s all very political.”<sup>106</sup> In other words it just depends on the situation.

...years ago when as a young college kid I first started coming up here we got all excited about seeing the fort restoration continued from what the CCC did and the bicentennial seemed a natural reason to do it. So our group was lobbying heavily. I remember an older woman, she was some kind of a travel writer in Maryland I forget her name and she said to me one day up there on the earth filled basher on the catwalk now don’t you think there is some merit to just leaving this as a ruin instead of imposing all this modern construction on it which it really not genuine or authentic? I thought my god what is she...that is a really stupid idea I did not say this to her ...of course this should be reconstructed. Me and my friends have a great playground to play in...I think that’s what gets behind a lot of restoration is local people get an interest in convince government to restore the place of course it’s for an educational purpose... If the CCC had left the place untouched I would say there is an argument for preserving it as a ruin, but the fact of the matter is the CCC had come in the 1930s and did their reconstruction actually probably did a pretty good job all things considered and at least had the sense not to try and reconstruct barracks. They did not know enough about them.<sup>107</sup>

The third and final section looks at the surveyed workers who are anti-reconstruction. Pennsbury Manor in Morrisville, Pennsylvania, was built by William Penn from 1683-1686. Penn only lived in the house until from 1699 to 1701, when he returned to England with his second wife, Hannah Callowhill, their son John, and Letitia, a child from his first wife. Penn’s heirs sold the estate in the 1700s and the house fell into ruin. In 1932 the Charles Warner Company donated ten acres of the original site to the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. For the next nine years the Pennsylvania Historical

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<sup>105</sup> Ross Kimmel Interview May 21, 2008. Maryland State Historian.

<sup>106</sup> Ross Kimmel Interview May 21, 2008 1:33:07-1:33:22.

<sup>107</sup> Ross Kimmel Interview May 21, 2008 2:15:50-2:17:20.

Commission reconstructed the manor. The group followed archeology and Penn's original instructions for the building of the home. Lara Murphy works as an Interpretative Researcher at Pennsbury Manor. Murphy stated about the reconstruction "It was a controversial topic in the 1930's. From a scholarly point of view, the site should not have been reconstructed."<sup>108</sup>

Valley Forge National Historical Park, is the location of the Continental Army's Winter Encampment in 1777-1778, under the command of General George Washington. "He issued an order for the approx. 12,000 troops to erect huts (log cabins) to protect them from the elements and low temperatures. Within ten years after the encampment, no evidence of the log structure of hundreds of huts remained."<sup>109</sup> Timothy Preston Long, Historical Architect for the site, states that the reason he is not in favor of reconstruction is "It runs counter to the Secretary of Interior's Standards to construct a new feature when no pictorial or physical evidence exists. It is creating a false historical appearance."<sup>110</sup>

The State of Mississippi's historical sites are run by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. The state runs historic sites at fifteen properties and most of the properties are not open to the public. They range from archeological sites to Civil War battlefields. Jim Barnett, Mississippi Department of Archives and History's director, talked about the 27 years that he had been with the department. Only twice did the thought of reconstructing historical buildings come up, he said:

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<sup>108</sup> Lara Murphy, email to author, February 18, 2008. *Pennsbury Manor Website*. <http://www.pennsburymanor.org/Guide.html>. Lara Murphy at the time of the interview was the Head of Interpretive Research at Pennsbury Manor.

<sup>109</sup> Timothy Preston Long, email to author, February 10, 2008. Timothy Preston Long at the time of the interview was the Historical Architect at Valley Forge National Historical Park. *Valley Forge National Historical Park Website*. <http://www.nps.gov/vafo/historyculture/index.htm>.

<sup>110</sup> Timothy Preston Long, email to author, February 10, 2008.

A building called Assembly Hall at Washington, Mississippi which is where historic Jefferson College is... We were set to acquire this 1811 building and it burned... And so we went ahead and purchased just the property as an archeological site we have not... never seriously discussed the doing the reconstruction... we discussed it a couple of times... but I don't think anybody really wants to do this. I don't think our board of trustees has ever formally adopted a policy on reconstructions. We are involved right now in what is a reconstruction of a civil war period building. .. We've had some long discussions about reconstruction pros and cons and the project we're involved with now is a building called the Coker House on the Champion Hill battlefield in Hinds County, Mississippi. And the Coker House was previously owned by a private Civil War group and they just could not manage the upkeep and restoration of the house it deteriorated quickly. In 2000, they donated or deeded the property to the Department of Archives and History and we received a grant about that same time from the federal highway transportation a transportation enhancement grant to develop historic properties that were part of the Vicksburg Campaign trail and the Coker House is part of that. So money was set aside at the point to restore the Coker House. We finally got to the point now where we have begun this process. The only problem is that the Coker House was so far deteriorated that essentially we have dismantled the house and in fact now it is now completely dismantled and the useable parts of it are in storage... and we do have a plan although no funding in place yet, but a plan to rebuild this house with as much of original material as possible... I am going to guess that once this is all done maybe less than twenty-five percent of the structure will be original.. material and we have argued and it's been difficult to come to an agreement on this project because it is actually a reconstruction. Even though you can stretch the restoration term to possibly include this it really is a reconstruction.<sup>111</sup>

The building will be going on the original foundation. When asked about how he felt on the matter of reconstructing historical buildings, he stated "Personally I do not [believe in reconstructing historical buildings]... My feeling is there are so many buildings standing in need of being saved that I feel that we're better off focusing on them. The Coker House has been an interesting situation, because the funding that we have to do this work is focused on the Vicksburg Campaign Trail and there are only at least on public property

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<sup>111</sup> Jim Barnett Interview March 19, 2008. 0.00-9:45. Jim Barnett at the time of the interview was the Director of Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

two remaining structures that are not in Vicksburg on battlefields that relate to that campaign.”<sup>112</sup> That’s why he believes money has been put toward Coker House.

Though a small survey from sites across the country, the data received from this study gives an idea about what site workers feel about reconstructing historical structures. Those who are pro-reconstruction stated the following reasons for their views. First, education for all ages, teaching about the history of the site, using the reconstructed building for living history and the tangibles of how a building looks, feels and smells. Second, having a historical building to see when visiting a site. Third, reconstruction preserves heritage for future generations. Fourth, as the only structure of its kind at a location or area with historic structures.

Some of the individuals interviewed who worked at historic sites qualify their support by arguing that reconstruction must be on a case-by-case basis. As one person stated, “it depends on the situation when it comes down to reconstructing historical buildings.” Others noted, as opponents of reconstruction had warned, that political and social pressures from local constituents were the reason for the reconstruction at some sites. One said that “they did not have a choice, but to reconstruct over a site.”

A few site workers opposed reconstructing historical buildings, and they had several reasons for that opposition. First, the fear of the historical site falsifying history or how the building would appear to the public. Second, to protect an archeological site from destruction. Third, to put the money toward an historical building rather than

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<sup>112</sup> Jim Barnett Interview March 19, 2008. 9:45-11:06.

toward a reconstruction. Fourth, some say, incorrectly, that reconstruction violates the Department of the Interior Standards for the preservation of historical buildings.

Again these are just a few views from site workers in the field. Most are interested in educating the public. A site reconstructing a historical building can educate the public on historical architecture of that time period, how historical buildings are built, and how people lived in a certain area at a certain time period, these workers share this view.

## Illustrations of the Historic Site



Fort Frederick State Park, Big Pool, MD. Photo from the Maryland Park Service, Department of Natural Resources. May 5, 1975, east barracks under reconstruction, showing modern construction methods used in places that would not show in the final product.



Fort Frederick State Park, Big Pool, MD. Photo from the Maryland Park Service, Department of Natural Resources. July 25, 1975, west barracks under reconstruction, showing modern construction methods used in places that would not show in the final product.



Fort Frederick State Park, Big Pool, MD. Photo from the Maryland Park Service, Department of Natural Resources. September 11, 1975, west barracks under reconstruction.



Fort Frederick State Park, Big Pool, MD. Photo from the Maryland Park Service, Department of Natural Resources. August 11, 1975, east barracks under reconstruction, showing modern construction methods that would not show in the final product.





Fort Frederick State Park, Big Pool, MD. Photo from the Maryland Park Service, Department of Natural Resources. September 11, 1975, east barracks interior under reconstruction; note stone facings on fireplaces, covering modern cinderblock to simulate a solid stone masonry.



Fort Frederick State Park, Big Pool, MD. Photo from the Maryland Park Service, Department of Natural Resources. November 1975, east barracks upon completion of reconstruction. Photo by Dave Harp.



Fort Frederick State Park, Big Pool, MD. Photo from the Maryland Park Service, Department of Natural Resources. November 1875, west barracks (foreground) and east barracks upon completion of reconstruction. Photo by Dave Harp.



Reconstructed Blacksmith Shop-Herbert Hoover NHS-Image proved by the NPS



Blacksmith demonstrating in the Reconstructed Blacksmith Shop at Herbert Hoover NHS-Photo provided by the NPS.



Reconstructed Tryon Palace. New Burn, NC. Photo by Alyssa Holland.





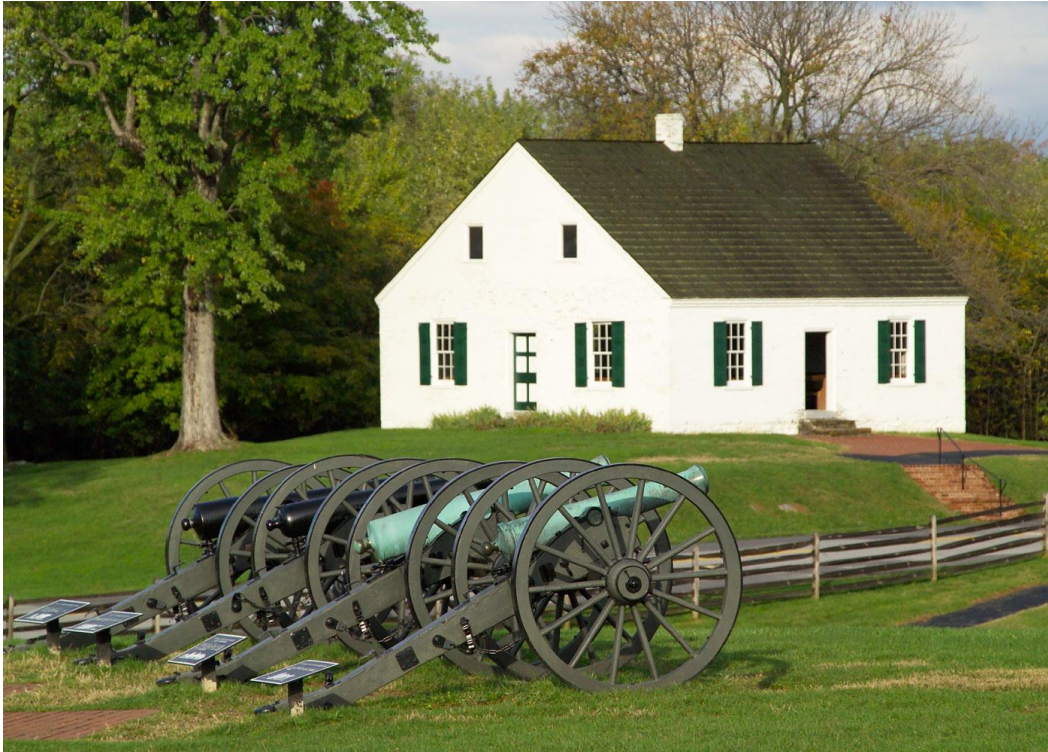
Reconstructed Pennsbury Manor-Photo from the Pennsbury Manor Website.  
<http://www.pennsburymanor.org/Photos.html>.



The Reconstructed Bent's Old Fort NHS-Photo taken from website-  
<http://www.nps.gov/beol/historyculture/index.htm>.



The Reconstructed Bent's Old Fort NHS-Carpenter Shop-Photo taken from website-  
<http://www.nps.gov/beol/photosmultimedia/Virtual-Tour-of-Fort.htm>.



Reconstructed Dunker Church-Antietam National Battlefield-Photo taken from Website  
<http://www.nps.gov/anti/photosmultimedia/Modern-Photographs.htm>.



Dunker Church destroyed by windstorm- Antietam National Battlefield-Photo taken from Website  
<http://www.nps.gov/anti/historyculture/dunkerchurch.htm>.



Reconstructed Jamestown Church- Taken from website-<http://www.npca.org/parks/jamestown-national-historic-site.html>.



Parts of the original Jamestown Fort being reconstructed-Colonial National Historical Park





Fort Halifax's Reconstructed Blockhouse. Photo taken from website <http://www.maine.gov/doc/parks/history/forthalifax/index.htm>



Workers from Maine's Department of Conservation go after logs from the blockhouse that was destroyed by a flood in 1987. Photo taken from website <http://www.maine.gov/doc/parks/history/forthalifax/index.htm>



Reconstructed Sawmill at Wade House. Photo taken from website-  
<http://wadehouse.wisconsinhistory.org/Explore/Sawmill/Riverview.aspx>.



Reconstructed Blacksmith Shop at Wade House. Photo taken from website-  
<http://wadehouse.wisconsinhistory.org/Explore/Blacksmith/Dockstader.aspx>.





Reconstructed soldier hut at Morristown National Historical Park- Photo from-  
[http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/glimpses3/glimpses2b.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/glimpses3/glimpses2b.htm)



Fort Loudoun-Commandant's Quarters. Photo provided by Fort Loudoun State Park.



Fort Loudoun, TN. Photo provided by Fort Loudoun State Park.



Fort Loudoun View- Photo provided by Fort Loudoun State Park.





Reconstructed soldier huts-Valley Forge National Historical Park- Photo taken by Alyssa Holland



Reconstructed Fort Stanwix-Photo provided by the NPS.



Wright Tavern, Wentworth, NC : Color photos show reconstruction of rear ell. Other miscellaneous photos.

Photos provided by Rockingham County Historical Society





Reconstructed Pergola- Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House- <http://www.darwinmartinhouse.org/tour.cfm#>.



Reconstructed Conservatory- Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House- <http://www.darwinmartinhouse.org/tour.cfm#>.



Reconstructed Carriage House-Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House- <http://www.darwinmartinhouse.org/tour.cfm#>.



Courtesy of National Park Service

Reconstructed George Washington Birthplace home



Reconstructed Gristmill-Old Sturbridge Village. Photo taken from website.  
[http://www.osv.org/explore\\_learn/village\\_tour.html?S=L-23](http://www.osv.org/explore_learn/village_tour.html?S=L-23).



Reconstructed Sawmill- Old Sturbridge Village-Photo taken from website.  
[http://www.osv.org/explore\\_learn/village\\_tour.html?S=L-35](http://www.osv.org/explore_learn/village_tour.html?S=L-35).





One of George Frankenstein's paintings of the village of Appomattox Court House in 1866. "Main Street" facing east down the Lynchburg-Richmond Stage Road. McLean House and outbuildings on the right and the Courthouse straight down the road. Courtesy of Appomattox Court House National Historical Park.



1865 McLean House- Courtesy of Appomattox Court House National Historical Park





Courtesy of Appomattox Court House National Historical Park



Reconstructed McLean House-Photo by Alyssa Holland



Reconstructed McLean House Slave Quarters and Kitchen-Courtesy of Appomattox Court House National Historical Park- <http://www.nps.gov/apco/historyculture/historic-structures-at-appomattox-court-house.htm>



Reconstructed Alfred Burton Jewelry Store at Harper's Ferry National Historical Site-Photo taken by Alyssa Holland





In the process of reconstructing the Richard Charlton's Coffee House in 2009 at Colonial Williamsburg-Photo taken by Alyssa Holland



The reconstruction of James Anderson's Kitchen, Blacksmith shop and a Public Armory which is currently going on in 2011 at Colonial Williamsburg-Photo taken from website-  
<http://whatsnew.history.org/topics/armoury/>.



Franklin House steel “Ghost Structure” in Philadelphia, PA-Photo taken from website  
<http://www.nps.gov/archeology/sites/npSites/franklincourt.htm>.



Polegreen Church “Ghost Structure”-Photo taken from website-  
<http://www.historicpolegreen.org/visit/>

### Chapter Three-Visitor Interviews

Historic sites want to attract visitors. What is the point to having or preserving a historic site without people coming to see it? That's why it is important to get the visitor's point of view on the subject of historical reconstruction. The first two chapters of this thesis focused on the history of reconstruction and how the professionals at historic sites felt about reconstruction. This chapter will venture into an area that no one has yet undertaken: the visitors' view on the reconstruction of historical buildings. Over the last seven years while working at Appomattox Court House I have been asked often by visitors which buildings are original. What happened to the original buildings? Why did the park service reconstruct the McLean House? These questions aroused my interest in asking visitors what they thought about the reconstruction of a historical building.

The first order of business was to find a historic location with reconstructed historical buildings that would allow me to interview visitors. The reason I could not survey at Appomattox Court House NHP was the superintendent decided that only National Park Service issued surveys were allowed on site. Red Hill, located in Charlotte County, Virginia, is where Patrick Henry spent the last five years of his life and is buried. The background of Red Hill starts in the 1770s when Richard Booker built the one and a half story plantation house for Booker and his family. The house is a wooden frame structure having three rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs. In 1794 Patrick Henry and his family bought and moved into the house. Later the house was expanded by John

Henry, one of Patrick Henry's sons, who had inherited the property. The property stayed in the Henry Family even after Red Hill burned in 1919. After the last descendent of Henry died in 1944, the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation was created to manage this historic site. This foundation was responsible for the reconstruction of all the historic buildings including the restoration of Henry's original law office. Red Hill, the main house, was reconstructed in 1957. Other reconstructions on site are the Carriage House, rebuilt on its original site, and the Slave's or Cook's Cabin, reconstructed with some of the wood from the original cabin. The Kitchen and Quarter Place Cabin are also historical reconstructions. On June 6, 1986, Congress designated Red Hill as Patrick Henry National Memorial. Though a national monument, the Patrick Henry National Memorial is still run by the Patrick Henry Foundation, a non-profit charitable corporation, and does not receive any federal funding from the National Park Service.<sup>113</sup>

Between December 2009 and May 2010, I surveyed visitors on-site and also had visitors send the survey back to me via mail. Of fifty surveys distributed, twenty-eight surveys were returned. At the time of this survey the average participant's age was 57.1 years old, all participants were white, and sixteen were women and twelve were men. Twenty-three out of the twenty-eight participants were from places in the state of

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<sup>113</sup> Most of the historical building reconstructions were done before the site became Red Hill National Monument. The site is protected by federal law, but lets the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation run the site. It was the wish of the Department of the Interior "that the ownership of Red Hill remains non-Federal...costs of operations and maintenance for the estate shall be borne from non-Federal funds, services and material." *U.S. Senate Joint Resolution 187, January 21, 1986.* [http://www.redhill.org/history/history\\_resolution\\_187.htm](http://www.redhill.org/history/history_resolution_187.htm); "Red Hill National Monument," National Park Service Laws Supplement VI, 99<sup>th</sup>, 100<sup>th</sup> and 101<sup>th</sup> Congresses, January 1985-December 1990, pg. 568-570. <http://www.nps.gov/legal/parklaws/toc2.htm>; "Red Hill" National Register of Historic Places Inventory, National Park Service, United State Department of the Interior, [http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/register/Counties/Charlotte/019-0027\\_Red\\_Hill\\_1978\\_Final\\_Nomination.pdf](http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/register/Counties/Charlotte/019-0027_Red_Hill_1978_Final_Nomination.pdf); Red Hill-The Patrick Henry National Memorial website. <http://www.redhill.org/memorialfoundation.htm>.



Virginia: Richmond, Keysville, Farmville, Gladys, Danville, Brookneal, Charlotte County, Yorktown, Herndon and Rustburg. Education levels for the surveyed included: three high school graduates, three with some college, one night college graduate, two with some post-graduate schooling, eight with master's degrees, one had some doctoral and two had their doctorate.<sup>114</sup> Out of the twenty-eight surveyed twelve people are employed, nine retired, three kept house, one unemployed intern, two students and one retired but running a farm. When asked how often they traveled to historical sites eleven said they traveled some, eleven said they travel often and four traveled regularly.<sup>115</sup> All visitors that were surveyed have visited historical locations with reconstructed buildings prior to visiting Red Hill.<sup>116</sup>

The first survey question was "How do you feel about an historic site reconstructing historical buildings?" Out of the twenty-eight visitors that answered surveys, twenty-five people remarked they were pro-reconstruction of historical buildings. Three respondents answered "that it depends on the situation" or on a "case-

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<sup>114</sup> Why this survey had a slightly highly education level than the normal group of visitors may be due to the site's isolated location. A visitor has to drive a distance into the country side to visit Red Hill, and no major roads or highways are in the area. A person really has to want to travel there, which would select for visitors with strong interest in history.

<sup>115</sup> Occupations of the surveyed included an administrator, artist, farmer, manager, engineer, administration assistant, two homemakers, higher education, retired nurse, librarian, welder/fitter, engineer-telecommunications, two teachers, Intern/museum tech, tour guide, student, engineering educator, system analyst, home economics teacher, working on special education masters/mom, medical transcriptionist, former High School History teacher, and childcare/cleaning business/horse breeder and trainer. Household income: ten people with less than \$50,000, two with less than \$75,000, eight with less than \$100,000, six with more than \$100,000 and two that did not specify.

<sup>116</sup> Information is from question two on the overall survey. Locations that the surveyed have visited that had historical reconstructed buildings include: Colonial Williamsburg, VA; Marbry Mill, Blue Ridge Parkway, VA; Poplar Forest in Lynchburg, VA; Jamestown, VA; Appomattox Court House NHP, Appomattox, VA; Genage, Canada; locations in Niagara Falls, NY; Ruffner Hall, Longwood University, Farmville, VA; George Washington Birthplace, Pope's Creek, VA; Mount Vernon's distillery, Mount Vernon, VA; Point of Honor, Lynchburg, VA; Old Salem, NC; locations within Philadelphia; Forest History Center in Minnesota; Polynesian Cultural Center, Hawaii Palace on Oahu; and locations throughout Europe, Canada and Asia.

by-case basis.” None of the participants mentioned any anti-reconstruction sentiment toward reconstructed historical buildings.

Nine of the twenty-five participants that were pro-reconstruction, and their answers came back stating “they approve or are fine with the idea of reconstructing historical buildings.” One respondent stated, “I definitely support it. We need to keep history alive for our future generations.” Another stated, “I approve. It seems to me the value at an historic site is to help the visitor learn about and, to the extent possible, experience the time and place of the historical event. Also, I want to be reminded that, hey, Patrick Henry walked through this door or at least a door that was where this door is now.” Another participant said, “If original drawings/paintings/architecture papers exist from which to reconstruct the site with a measure of fidelity to the original, then I support it. I do believe an archeologist should conduct an excavation prior to the reconstruction.” Another participant stated:

I think it is wonderful. It allows today’s population to see, feel and experience life as it was 200 or more years old. I visited Andersonville, GA, Civil War Prison camp, 3 different times (85, 87, 89) with my children's 5th grade school trips. I would like to share each experience. '85-Bus drove through .... Guide described horrors students not interested because all that was there were gallery green hills that were beautiful. Kids could not imagine horrors being described. '87-Bus drove through, we stopped because they were beginning to build fort + there was a [sic] "soldiers," dressed as prisoner describing horrors. Kids were interested and asked questions. '89 Recreation completed. 2 sided fort with "no more land." Soldiers, Camp sites of sick + poor. The students walked around asked questions, saw with their own eyes the horrors of Andersonville in 1860's. My son + his friends still remember that 5 group trip + talk about it. My 2 daughters don't even remember the horror, only the cemetery. The recreation left an indelible mark to be remembered. That is what reconstruction should do to our children + anyone who visits historical sites.



Some of the responses from the survey takers who were pro-reconstruction emphasize their support for reconstruction for education and the preservation of history. One participant stated, “Excited! It's recreating history, even if they use the most modern technologies. I assume that because it is already an historic site, they have done the archeological work needed to discover all artifacts, wall lines, basements, trash, etc. So they should be able to reconstruct buildings with a great deal of accuracy.” Another survey taker mentioned, “I support the idea. I think it helps to preserve history and promote education. Also commemorates and memorializes important historical sites.” Another participant states, “I think it’s wonderful that people have the foresight and means to reconstruct historical buildings.” Another respondent answered, “It is, in my opinion, far better to try to reconstruct historical buildings than to leave them in continuing decline and disrepair.” The last visitor stated, “It is the only way to share history with our present population to better exhibit our past. We cannot, in this day, appreciate how the people of those times lived with this reconstruction of their lives without visual aide[sic].”

Continuing with responses to question one, three participants commented on reconstruction being beneficial and enhancing the experiences of the site. One mentioned, “I feel that the historical plans and building enhances a person’s experiencing in visiting the site.” Another participant stated,

It is admirable, when done with authentic materials and attention to detail. It gives the visitor a true feeling of what the site was actually like when it was occupied during the date it is intended to represent. It also allows visitors to see activities being conducted (e.g. open hearth cooking, blacksmith work, etc.) without the problems of treating artifacts as museum pieces-that is, visitors can touch reproductions without the need for typical museum precautions (no gloves or velvet ropes are necessary).

From an educational experience perspective, perhaps it is more accurate for visitors to see a structure that looks "new") clean, well painted, fresh materials) rather than seeing materials that are 200+ years old, suffering from decay/aging and are "too valuable" to touch. For example, Patrick Henry would not have lived in a 200 year old house, with faded paint, flaking bricks, and worn floorboards.

Yet another response was, "Appreciate. Gives me a taste of history—though not authentic, still beneficial." The last response in this section is, "You get a much better feeling of the past when you can actually see & go in a building rather than just seeing a picture or hearing a person explain what was there." In chapter two, it is noted that staff complain at several historical locations that visitation remains low when there is nothing to see at the site. One of the participants stated that, "I think something well done is worth seeing--not as good as 'restored' but sometimes there is nothing to visit." There was one survey that was pro-reconstruction, but was very upset about the reconstruction at George Washington Birth Place. The survey stated, "The only one I found truly annoying was Washington's Birthplace. You go there and find out it is nothing like what would have been there when he was born."

Three respondents stated that it depends on the situation as to reconstructing a historical building. The first said, "I believe that it may be an appropriate course of action on a case-by-case basis." The second stated, "If it can be done with knowledge and proof of who it was, I am for it. However if it is based on guessing and embellishing what it could have been, I am against it." The last said, "It depends on the circumstances--if needed to tell the story. Also one must consider to what historical period you've relocating. It would have been inappropriate, for example, to have reconstructed the mansion that occupied this site after Patrick Henry's death. (note: In Europe, a great deal

of property bombed in WWII has been effectively reconstructed-Dresden, Cologne, Warsaw--etc).”

The next survey question was “Did the reconstructed buildings at this site enhance your visit?” All but one visitor wrote that the reconstructed structures did enhance the site. The explanations range from education to not wanting to visit if there weren’t reconstructed buildings. The surveyed stated that the reconstruction of the historical buildings enhanced their visit through educational value. One person wrote, “Yes, It is very educational to see how our founding fathers lived and how they supported their families.” Another person wrote, “Yes. I would know much less about this part of history had buildings not been reconstructed .” A different respondent stated, “Yes, because we were there to learn about Patrick Henry, + just seeing ruins + foundations couldn’t have told the story that well. Very nicely done.” Another participant stated, “Yes--especially those with people in period dress and working knowledge of that task.” The issue of education for children came up several times in the survey results. Another answer mentioned, “Yes-- The Slave Quarters, The Law Office. Everything so different from this day and time. Our Children and grandchildren need to see as well as read how things were in those days.” Another participant said “Absolutely! My sons especially loved the reconstructed blacksmith shop.” The final respondent said, “Yes, for example a reconstructed blacksmith shop is much more interesting and educational than an outline of the foundation where a building once existed. This is true for both adults and children, provided the reconstruction techniques adhere to the original methods/materials.”

Continuing with answers to question two, four respondents agreed that the reconstructed buildings enhanced the site because without these buildings the draw to

visit the site would not have been there. The first respondent said, “Yes. Without them [reconstructed buildings] there wouldn't be much to visit.” The second answerer said that “yes--the house [Red Hill] is reconstructed and the site would be very empty without the house.” The third wrote, “Yes. As I understand it, there were very few structures surviving. I don't think walking around a few foundations would have done too much for me.” The final quote, “Yes! I can't imagine coming to see this site without the buildings. It's a lovely visit and the valley below but without the reconstruction the history would be all but lost. It was made clear by the interpreters that everything was a reconstruction and may not exactly replicate the original. This keeps it from being ‘fake.’”

Other survey answers to question two mention historical accuracy. One respondent said, “Absolutely. Even though I know the buildings are not original. I know that the reconstruction is based upon historic records.” Another stated, “Yes, because it was done according to the original blue print. I feel a sense of truth.” The last statement concerning historical accuracy is, “The reconstruction is probably very realistic. I am familiar with the work of the architect for the reconstruction, Stanhope S. Johnson<sup>117</sup>, and I know his attention to detail.”

The third question from the surveys was “Generally, how authentic do you think reconstructed buildings are?” Some of the respondents stated percentages, saying that the accuracy of the historic buildings are, “7 out of 10” or “70-80%” or a “4 out of five.”

The largest group of answers to this survey question was the eleven participants stating that they believe the reconstructions to be accurate. One answered that it is

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<sup>117</sup> Stanhope S. Johnson, a Lynchburg, VA architect.

“Pretty good--better than nothing.” The next survey stated, “The ones that I have seen appear to be very accurate in their replication of the original. I think it is important to document the history and provenance of the original. (Great fire of 2001--Ruffner Hall at Longwood University)” Another respondent stated,

When done with care, the reconstruction building is just as accurate as the original. For example, the reconstruction of Jefferson's Poplar Forest retreat in Forest, VA is true to ‘form and function.’ All visible surfaces were (and continue to be) reconstructed with period tools, methods, and materials. Skilled craftsmen use the same methods as their predecessors from the 1810 time period. Another example is Williamsburg's recent reconstruction of the Charlton Coffee House on Duke of Gloucester Street. This building replaced a structure (Armistead Mansion from the antebellum period) and greatly improves the street scape.

Another answer was, “When done well, as in the cases I have mentioned, I think they are as authentic as possible.” Another commented,

If you are going to go to the trouble of reconstructing an historical building, and you are planning on presenting it as close to historic as possible, it would be optimal (of course) to research the project as thoroughly as possible. It is very good that here you have the plumbing and electricity in a building separate. Naturally the (or one) problem arises in deciding what modern conveniences to allow in the reconstruction.

The last survey stated, “The answer largely depends on material used, methods employed & adherence to the original plans. I do not believe it can be truly ‘authentic’, but reconstructions can evoke what was original & ‘authentic.’”

Continuing with question number three, none of the participants stated “no” to this particular survey question of how authentic reconstructions are but there were several visitors that indicated that it depends on the situation or varies from site to site. The first respondent stated, “It depends. It is rarely 100% authentic because the original material may not be available and some guess work may come in play. It also depends on how

old the site is.” The second responded, “It varies from situation to situation” The third mentioned, “It probably varies but I trust that the scholarship behind the reconstruction is good. And even original structures are not static. Look at all the cathedrals with electric lights.”

Survey question four, “Is there ever a time where reconstructing a historical building would be considered inappropriate.” Five survey respondents said “no”. The first said, “I cannot think of why it could be considered inappropriate. After all it is our ‘history’ and we should try to keep it alive even if it could be considered ‘politically incorrect.’” Another thought, “No. Remember history and learn from it. Be thankful for our past! Live for today well, so tomorrow will be special as well. Remember the Truth! (Not a lie!)” And a third said, “I can't think of any such time.”

Six of the participants surveyed stated that there are times when it would be seen as inappropriate. The first said, “Yes, I think it would not be appropriate to reconstruct a Nazi Concentration camp where thousands were murdered.” The next participant stated, “Yes I think so. If a building helps the visitor understand the historical significance of the building the site or better perhaps even a partly demolished building would be better left alone.” Another said, “Yes, when the social benefits derived from reconstruction do not justify the action.” A fourth mentioned, “Yes. Some stabilization + minor reconstruction is probably necessary. However, Ephesus, Anghor Wat, Egypt's pyramids etc, + Mayan sites in Central America are more effective as ruins than if reconstructed.”

The fifth survey question asked, “How would you feel about an historical site destroying an existing building in order to reconstruct a lost historical building?” This

relates to Fort Stanwix and Mount Vernon, where curators have destroyed buildings historical in their own right and reconstructed historical buildings better suited to the time period the site is interpreting. Five participants said that it was okay or did not see a problem destroying the existing building and reconstructing a new historical building. The first participant answered, "Fine if... New construction...Matches all measurements taken off old building." Another respondent mentioned, "OK if it is not someone's home" The last stated, "No problem."

Continuing responses to question five, twelve out of the twenty-eight respondents declared it depends on the situation. A sampling of the responses includes, "I think it depends on the building. For example I wouldn't want to see the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem destroyed to look at the older temple mount it is built on. Or the White House to see the original from the War of 1812." Another surveyor said, "Depends on what is being destroyed. If it's not key to the historical perspective, for example a subsequent owner built a shed on the site, I wouldn't have a problem with its distinction. If it is a historical existing building, I'd like to see it preserved." Another respondent said, "If the existing building is not historically correct or if it is in a state of disrepair, then I'd have no problem with that. If the existing building is historical itself that's a different story and I would not be as supportive of it." Another stated, "It would depend on the existing building. If the existing building held no real value to history or its community, then destroy it and reconstruct." Another participant stated, "It depends on the existing building. Is the existing bldg. of any consequence?" Another said, "In general, I have no problem with it, but it does depend on a balance between the significance of the history and the value of the existing building. It might be necessary to be patient. The existing

building will depreciate. The historical significance will not.” The last respondent: “If the existing building was important like a hospital, school etc. I wouldn't expect it to be destroyed. I don't think a historical bldg [sic] needs to be on the exact location in the case.”

Four of the twenty-eight said that they were against destroying an exciting historical building in order to reconstruct a lost historical building. The first respondent stated, “I wouldn't approve.” Another participant said, “Don't destroy a historical site-- remember the history and preserve it for generations to come, the best you can. Remember history and learn from the good and challenging times. Don't repeat the bad mistakes, but learn from them. Remember the truth not a lie.” The third respondent said, “do not agree.”

The sixth and last survey question was, “How would you feel about a historical site dismantling an existing building and then reconstructing it somewhere else?” Eight out of the twenty-eight participants stated that they are not for relocating a historic structure. One stated, “I'm not as crazy about this, but there are plenty of examples where it has been done well and made sense.” Another respondent said, “I think it should stay where the original building was built.” Another commented, “A historical site should be kept in its existing location, (history) Remember the Truth!” Another stated, “Would not support. Not sure why you would relocate it.” The final wrote, “I disagree with this concept. It should be restored + preserved where it is to preserve the history.”

Five participants stated that it was alright to relocate historic buildings. “This can be very effective--a reconstructed rural village in Romania brought buildings from all



over the country. In a case like this, it gives you an idea of the diversity during a particular period. However, careful labeling + documentation is critical.” Another answered, “I have no problem with this. Many times the neighborhood around historical site changes. I would not want to lose the historical site forever. Moving it allows everyone to still enjoy it!” The next commented, “I’ve seen this done elsewhere on our travels and as long as it is done carefully, with regards to location and authentic landscapes, I believe it is a way to preserve history that may not survive otherwise.” The last survey taker wrote, “O.K. if that would preserve it or make it more accessible.”

Continuing responses to question six, five participants said that it depends on the situation. The first participant stated, “If it is the building that is significant and not the location, no problem. I have visited various outdoor museums where buildings have been collected from around the region. Very nice. On the other hand, I understand they removed the McLean house from Appomattox. That didn't make sense. Plus, I understand they lost it.” Another commented, “If it is an improvement building I am against it. It should stay in its original place. If it is a simple tobacco barn it is ok to move it. If it is a building that will be lost due to a dam and the formation of a manmade lake. Yes move it.” The last survey taker stated, “It depends on the situation. If the building is in danger of being lost forever I'd rather see it relocated than lost.”

Five respondents to question six said that it keeps history alive. The first survey participant said, “If the place for it to be part is a worthwhile site.” Another stated, “It helps keep history alive” Another commented, “Not good but can be done to preserve building from impending Natural Disaster ie. Flood” The next stated, “If it can't stay on the original site I think dismantling and reconstructing is a good option. The last

respondent said, “This is unfortunate since the original surroundings are altered. However, many historic structures are located in urban areas that no longer reflect the conditions that existed when the building was constructed (for example Boxwood, Trenton, NJ), therefore relocation to a different site preferably nearby, may be advantageous and increase the number of visitors. Likewise, relocation is certainly better than demolition because of economic factors and real estate values.”

Though a small survey at a relatively small historic site the data received from this study gives us an idea of what some visitors feel about a historical site reconstructing historical building(s). Visitor interview answers were very similar to historic site interviews. They believe that historic building reconstructions help educate, keep history alive, provide something to see and experience how people lived in the past. Most visitors believe that the building reconstructions are more often than not accurate. Visitors are interested in how accurate the historic reconstructions and some believe that reconstructing historical buildings is a case-to-case basis. The message those surveyed: If you can’t make it accurate then don’t do it. On the dismantling of a historical building and sending it to another site, only half agreed.

Visitors want to learn history; they do care about historical sites and about what historic sites do in the preservation and the reconstructing of building(s). The information on this survey can help historic sites, teachers, and scholars to see that people are interested in history, heritage, and historic buildings. Individuals working in historic preservation who think that everyday people are not intelligent enough to understand a reconstructed building should examine this survey. As previously stated, visitors to Appomattox Court House ask most often about the reconstructed McLean House (how

did the park service reconstruct it, are there any original pieces) and how many buildings in the historic village are originals? They also ask questions about buildings that no longer stand within the village and why they have not been reconstructed. The park has placed name markers at most historic buildings and has named, in the brochure, all the buildings that no longer stand to allow visitors to try to imagine how the village would have looked back in 1865. At least from this survey visitors appear to take away knowledge from historic sites that pertain to the reconstruction of historic buildings.



Front of main house at Red Hill National Memorial-Photo taken by Alyssa Holland



Front of Main House at Red Hill National Memorial-Photo taken by Alyssa Holland



Back of Main House at Red Hill National Memorial-Photo taken by Alyssa Holland



Reconstructed Smokehouse at Red Hill

Photo taken by Alyssa Holland



Reconstructed Kitchen at Red Hill

Photo taken by Alyssa Holland



Reconstructed Blacksmith Shop- Photos taken by Alyssa Holland



Reconstructed Blacksmith Shop- Photos taken by Alyssa Holland

## Chapter Four-Conclusion

In 1938, Robert F. Lee, the second Chief Historian for the National Park Service, fought against the reconstruction of the McLean House at Appomattox Court House National Historical Park where Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered his army to Union General Ulysses S. Grant. Robert F. Lee believed that a “model” or paintings should be used as alternative interpretive tools instead of reconstructing the McLean House.<sup>118</sup> If Robert F. Lee had had his way the McLean House would never have been reconstructed and thousands of people per year could not step into the same space where Robert E. Lee and Grant met. The reconstruction was well researched by the NPS using archeology, the 1892 blue prints, inside and outside photographs and other historic documents to bring the building back to life. Visitors today not only learn about the Lee’s surrender, but different time periods of preservation and architectural history.

Chapter one reviewed the debate over the reconstruction of historical structures. The main arguments against reconstruction were that they focus on only one period in a structure’s life, that reconstructions are inherently inaccurate, and that they are not economically practical. Opponents also charge that reconstructions destroy archeology and present maintenance problems. Most important, they claim that visitors don’t

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<sup>118</sup> Barry Mackintosh, “National Park Service Reconstruction Policy and Practice.” *The Reconstructed Past: Reconstruction in the Public Interpretation of Archeology and History*, ed. John Jameson, Jr. (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004).

understand the difference and perceive a fake as genuine. On the other hand pro-reconstruction writers want to use the reconstructions as interpretive and educational tools for the public, especially at sites without any surviving structures and/or to add to the historical context of a site with some structures.

Chapter two analyzed the interviews with individuals who work at historical sites today. Those who are pro-reconstruction stated the following reasons for their views, which echoed the arguments of the pro-reconstruction writers. First, education for all ages, teaching about the history of the site, using the reconstructed building for living history and the tangibles of how a building looks, feels and smells. Second, having a historical building to see when visiting a site. Third, reconstruction preserves heritage for future generations. Fourth, as the only structure of its kind at location or area with historic structures. The pro-reconstruction arguments in the literature correspond with experience in the field.

Some of the individuals interviewed who worked at historic sites qualify their support by arguing that reconstruction must be on a case-by-case basis. As one person stated, “it depends on the situation when it comes down to reconstructing historical buildings.” Others noted, as opponents of reconstruction had warned, that political and social pressures from local constituents were the reason for the reconstruction at some sites. One said that “they did not have a choice, but to reconstruct over a site.”

A few site workers opposed reconstructing historical buildings, and they had several reasons for that opposition. First, the fear of the historical site falsifying history or how the building would appear to the public. Second, to protect an archeological site



from reconstruction. Third, to put the money toward a historical building rather than toward a reconstruction. Fourth, some say, incorrectly, that reconstruction violates the Department of the Interior Standards for the preservation of historical buildings.

Chapter 3 analyzed the visitors' views from the interviews at Red Hill National Monument which generally favored the reconstruction of historical buildings. Most participants said that the reasons they favored reconstruction included: enhancing the experience at the historic site, for educational purposes, keeping history alive for this and future generations, for visitors who want to see something tangible when they go to a historical site, and finally, visitors more fully appreciate how people lived with the buildings to show how they lived. Only three respondents stated "that it depended on the situation" or "case to case basis" as to the reconstruction of historical buildings. None of the visitors stated they were against reconstructions.

Visitors again are the reason we have historic sites. What is the point to having or preserving a historic site without people coming to see it? Historical sites continue to reconstruct historical buildings. Colonial Williamsburg reconstructed the Richard Charlton Coffeehouse in 2008 and is currently working on the James Anderson blacksmith shop and public armory. Fort Dobbs, a French and Indian War site, in Statesville, North Carolina, after years of archeology and research, is beginning the reconstruction of the fort. As long as we want visitors to visit historic sites, many sites will consider reconstructing historical buildings.

The debate over reconstructed historical buildings will go on as long as there are historical reconstructions. In my opinion, as supported in the literature and the survey,

decisions are truly on a case-to-case basis. Does the site have enough historical and archeological information? Can it afford maintenance for the historical reconstruction over time? How recently was a structure lost or destroyed or damaged? Visitors do care about the what, where, and why of historical buildings and the land they occupy. At APCO questions about which buildings are original start in the visitor center, as visitors ask about the village and what happened to the buildings, particularly the original McLean House. The questions about reconstructed and original buildings are central to interpretation at the park.

Another consideration in the literature and the surveys is the interpretive space a reconstruction creates. APCO visitors care about the space once they enter the reconstructed McLean House and the room where General Robert E. Lee and General U. S. Grant stood in 1865 at the end of the American Civil War. Visitors come from all over the United States and from most areas of the world, and although some stand in the surrender room for a few seconds, others stand for ten minutes or more. That space is as meaningful as the few original pieces of furniture and five thousand original bricks in the front of the house. The hard work of the NPS, who completed the research and reconstruction that allows visitors to stand in the space that structurally reproduces the original, made those visitor experiences possible.

Even if a visitor is not a “history person,” many people do care about their history. This particular reconstruction helps make my job important and worthwhile. Watching someone walk outside to touch the original brick, stop to take pictures of the original vases, or slowly walk into the parlor room and stand in silence in a space where

history was made, in my opinion justifies the reconstruction of the McLean House and other historical buildings.

Fortunately, the debate over reproductions appears to have educated staff and visitors at Appomattox and elsewhere. From the survey, visitors seem to remember where they have seen reconstructions and sometimes what happened to the original buildings. With most sites paying close attention to federal preservation laws and informing the visitor which buildings are original through brochures, exhibits, online information and interpretive talks the public is informed. The public does appreciate all the information a site can give on the historical building(s) and about the reconstructions and the preservation of original buildings. Sites that continue to reconstruct and follow all the preservation laws and regulations and inform the public on why the site reconstructed the building are getting it right. Even with a situation where a politician(s) are pushing a historical site toward reconstructing a historical building, such as what happened at Fort Stanwix, the sites seem to follow the Department of the Interior and NPS standards for preservation and reconstruction.

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